

101 Ways to Work With a Virtual Assistant

By:



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Introduction

This white paper examines:

- 1) What is a virtual assistant?
- 2) What is a virtual staffing agency?
- 3) What are the benefits of hiring a virtual assistant?
- 4) What are the benefits of hiring a virtual assistant through a virtual staffing agency?
- 5) 101 tasks a virtual assistant can do for the real estate professional.
- 6) Case studies of real estate professionals utilizing the services of virtual assistants.
- 7) Comparison virtual staffing v. bricks-and-mortar staffing

Many real estate professionals have adopted the use of virtual assistants within the past three years. This growing trend has significantly changed business processes within the industry. The following white paper will examine the impact of the virtual assistant trend and explore various ways real estate professionals can use virtual assistants to the benefit of their own business.

What is a virtual assistant?

“Virtual Assistants (VAs) are independent entrepreneurs providing professional administrative, creative, managerial, technical, business office and/or personal support services. Virtual office assistants use the most advanced means of communication, and the newest and most efficient and time saving office products and work delivery, regardless of geographic boundaries. Virtual Assistants work from their own offices, on a contractual basis, and abide by an established Code of Ethics requiring integrity, honesty and due diligence”

~The Alliance for Virtual Business

Many small businesses and associations suggest the use of virtual office assistants so their clients and members can concentrate on their core abilities. Even *Inc. Magazine* and *Entrepreneur* discuss the benefits of utilizing virtual help.

"... gotta love the detail and quick conversations! I love not paying for people to be sitting in an office filing their nails!"

*Name Withheld,
Real Estate Investor*

Small businesses and self-employed individuals are turning to virtual office assistants, graphic designers, and web developers in order to stay on top of those tasks while eliminating the need to support a full-time staff. As *USA Today* wrote, "The savings come from being able to concentrate efforts on building the business instead of balancing the checkbook and typing envelopes."

Your time and money are worth more when you are able to concentrate on what you do best and leave the rest to an assistant. Virtual office assistants work from their own home-based offices and are highly trained in their skill areas as well as a variety of technologies. Many of them have advanced degrees as well as years

of professional experience. Not only can a virtual assistant relieve you of mundane, everyday tasks, but also in many cases, s/he can even help you grow your business.

Depending on the level of service you choose, a virtual assistant can do virtually everything necessary to support you and your administrative needs and marketing efforts.

Virtual office assistants work best as an extension of you. In other words, if you are utilizing a marketing method or target market that works well for you, it's best to use your assistant to duplicate those efforts in those markets.

Virtual assistants typically work in the following areas:

- ✓ Virtual receptionists
- ✓ Travel arrangements
- ✓ Appointment setting
- ✓ Topic research
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Event planning
- ✓ Executive-level assistant
- ✓ Data entry
- ✓ Customer support
- ✓ Web site design and set up
- ✓ Cold calling
- ✓ General administrative assistant
- ✓ Appointment reminder calls
- ✓ Letter preparation
- ✓ Meeting arrangements
- ✓ Mailing preparation and processing
- ✓ Bookkeeping
- ✓ Accounting
- ✓ E-mail screening and processing
- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Closing assistance
- ✓ Warm calling

What is a virtual staffing agency?

A virtual staffing agency (VSA) operates similarly to a bricks-and-mortar temp, or staffing, agency. A VSA recruits and gathers virtual assistants on a wide-scale, screens and tests those virtual assistants, and matches to clients based on client needs and demands. A VSR often trains virtual assistants as well, showing them how to take their bricks-and-mortar skills and use them in a virtual world.

A client will call a VSA, discuss the skills and abilities that they need and the VSA will locate a virtual assistant for the client based on those needs.

"...thanks for setting me up with Hollis. She's perfect!"

*Dave Schiman,
Real Estate Investor*

The VSA standardizes the pricing for a virtual assistant so that clients do not need to sort through many individual virtual assistants, decipher their pricing, deposits, length-of-time commitments, and individual skills. In short, a VSA will act as the client's human resources department, manages the virtual assistant for the client, performs all of the billing to the client, performs all of the payables to the virtual assistant, replaces virtual assistants if they should leave, releases a virtual assistant on the client's behalf, if necessary, and takes the pressure of hiring and firing out of the client's hands and further allows the client to focus attention on impacting the bottom line.

What are the Benefits of Hiring a Virtual Assistant?

Probably the biggest draw to hiring a virtual assistant is the ability to delegate work to people who have better skills, and can do work you don't know how to do, don't have time to do, or just don't want to do. The next big draw, when talking virtual assistants over bricks-and-mortar assistants is that virtual assistants only clock-in and work when you need them and use their own resources. In other words they're not charging you to sit there and play solitaire.

Just a few of the things you can expect to gain by hiring a virtual assistant:

- Avoid buying an additional computer for your assistant
- Avoid buying a desk for an assistant to sit at
- Keep workers OUT of your office/home office.
- Avoid paying FICA (Social Security Tax) – legally!
- Avoid paying unemployment tax – legally!
- Avoid paying for holiday, vacation, and sick time.
- Help reduce vehicle emissions.
- Have happier workers that are more efficient at their jobs.
- Pay ONLY for the time used/work produced – not several hours a week more.
- Finance your payroll with your credit card or PayPal.
- Have all of the administrative and telemarketing services customized at no additional charge.
- Find top-notch workers by the hundreds – browse their skills, and find them in mere moments.
- Get highly-focused workers from around the country for a fraction of the cost of hiring locally.
- Stay on budget with your staffing needs.
- Keep your workforce and company flexible to meet peaks and valleys in the company's workflow needs.

- Keep your business flexible so that, as a small business, you have efficiency advantages over the big guys.
- Gain more time, which you can either use for your personal life or focus on other areas of your business.
- Hire workers who don't require long-term obligations.
- Easily locate good help for difficult projects and tasks requiring rare or

"We appreciate the free time that your extremely well-run company has given me - and for giving me my life back! Best wishes in 2005. "

*Name Withheld,
Real Estate Investor*

niche skills.

- Get daily reports from the assistant so you can see where your money is going every day.
- Increase your business exponentially by utilizing a telemarketer to help locate more leads who will convert into sales.
- Have as many or as few individual assistants assigned as I need - whether one or a dozen.
- Have a worker or workers from a wide variety of backgrounds leveraging their skills and talents in ways you might not have thought possible.

What are the Benefits of Using a Virtual Staffing Agency?

Business Week reported that in 2004 the average number of days it took to fill job vacancies for American companies was 48. 48 days with no administrative help can be devastating to any small business. Further to the devastation, on average it cost each company an average \$3,270.00 per hire!

Those lengths of time and amounts of money, if not devastating, can certainly be somewhat crippling to a small business who needs to remain nimble and often work on a shoestring budget.

Working with a virtual staffing agency alleviates the client from that initial outgo to locate the perfect worker and reduces the hire time to almost zilch. VSA's rely on their large talent pools, standardized tests, and expertise to locate just the right person for the client in the shortest amount of time possible.

A VSA doesn't just tell you where you can find a virtual assistant. They assess your needs and match you with one of their highly-skilled and trained virtual assistants. The company then monitors and nurtures that relationship so you get the most out of hiring virtually. A VSA can truly be your virtual human resources department.

Why not hire an in-office assistant or hire my own virtual office assistant?

Of course a client can go out on the Internet and hire a local virtual office assistant or in-office assistant to perform the same tasks as a virtual assistant obtained through a virtual staffing agency.

However, the client will lose out on the following value-added benefits that **ONLY** VSA's provide:

- **Free training time.** Many VSA's negotiate free training time on your behalf with the virtual assistant. This is free time that you can use to train the virtual assistant to perform *your* tasks *your* way.
- **Client Services Representatives.** Many VSA's staff client service representatives to assist you if you have problems with the virtual assistant or with working virtually. Most VSA's do not charge for the time the CSR spends working with or coaching you on the intricacies of working and hiring virtually.
- **Training.** A good VSA will offer initial training as well as continual coaching to its virtual assistants in order to help them better help the client.
- **Replacement virtual assistants.** Should the virtual assistant become ill,

"P.S. I may be getting a V.A. If the other virtual assistants are as good as you, then I'm sure I'll be pleased with the service at Team Double-Click. "

*Unknown,
New Real Estate Investor*

- take a vacation or fail to perform to expectation, the VSA will quickly replace that virtual assistant or offer a fill-in.
- **Prescreening.** Virtual staffing agencies employ rigorous prescreening and interview processes before they place virtual assistants with their clients.
 - **Access to greater talent.** Because VSA's have access to more virtual assistants, they can pick and choose the best assistant based on client needs. A VSA can also quickly locate additional talent as the client's needs and business grows. So a client may start with a general virtual assistant and eventually need a graphic designer or web designer. A VSA can quickly locate and place this talent with the client.
 - **Standardized pricing.** When searching for virtual assistants on the Internet, clients meet with a wide range of prices, services, availability, client service levels, length-of-time commitments, deposit requirements

and so on. With a VSA the price is the same each time and is based on the task – not the individual wishes of the virtual assistant. The VSA negotiates the pricing with the virtual assistants so that it fits within the VSA's price structure. So the client always has a standard, dependable price. Most often a virtual staffing agency's pricing is much lower than that charged by individual virtual assistants.

Obtaining a virtual assistant through a virtual staffing agency saves the client a significant amount of money and aggravation over trying to hire a virtual assistant yourself. VSA's know how valuable your time is and understand that the client would rather focus on the things that will help *make* money, so they do most of the legwork involved in hiring and retaining virtual assistants.

101 Ways To Work With A Virtual Assistant

(Okay, so it's more like 150+ - we wanted to give you a little extra bang)

*Remember all documents created by or used by a virtual assistant (VA) can be **quickly and easily transmitted** via email attachment, FTP, fax, delivery of CD or hard copy using overnight delivery, priority mail or regular postal services. Today's technology, such as text messaging and remote computer software makes almost **any administrative task "virtually" easy** to manage at a distance.*

"Excellent call on referring Team Double-Click. I'm getting into the habit of using them and I am getting REI projects done much quicker than my procrastinating butt would do :-)."

*Will Smith,
Real Estate Investor*

Investor-Specific Tasks

For real estate investors, virtual assistants can...

- 1) Research for potential sellers via online newspapers, online courthouse records, MLS listings, FSBO listings
- 2) Call housing contractors to get quotes, pass those quotes on to you for selection and approval, set up the contractor and baby sit him or her for until the job is done...correctly, on-time, and on budget.
- 3) Screen sellers for motivation
- 4) Send tenant or tenant buyer applications to potential tenants
- 5) Arrange home showings
- 6) Process mailings to potential sellers
- 7) Perform outbound telemarketing calls seeking sellers
- 8) Call to have utilities discontinued or set up on behalf of the client

- 9) Enter leads into your CRM (contact relationship management) program.
This may be Top Producer, ACT!, or another program.
- 10) Research to locate absentee owners, or people who've skipped out on their rent
- 11) Set/cancel appointments
- 12) Work with Excel spreadsheets to organize leads and other data
- 13) Work with MS Word to create mail merges and process mailings
- 14) Answer incoming calls
- 15) Return phone calls
- 16) Type and send letters or contracts
- 17) Make travel arrangements
- 18) Call for quotes for other services
- 19) Order services on your behalf
- 20) Screen and answer the your emails
- 21) Prepare newsletters for your clients
- 22) Plan events or meetings
- 23) Arrange and put together seminars or teleseminars
- 24) Proof read your written materials
- 25) Transcribe your meetings
- 26) Correspond with tenants regarding payments and late fees, via mail and phone
- 27) Order inspections
- 28) Obtain credit information on future tenants
- 29) Screen potential tenants asking questions such as ability to obtain down payment money, asking for phone numbers and addresses of where they may be reached.
- 30) Compile mailing list from expired MLS listings
- 31) Prepare legal documents for closings
- 32) Mail outs such as postcards or letters for marketing purposes
- 33) Check Voice Mail; Return calls
- 34) Photos (edit and list on websites)

- 35) Research
- 36) Closing management and coordination
- 37) Flyers
- 38) Listing presentations
- 39) Virtual tours
- 40) Open house invitations
- 41) Thank you notes
- 42) Newsletters
- 43) Customer call backs
- 44) Property cards
- 45) Postcards - just listed or just sold
- 46) Promotional mailing

"Huy, Mary and I were talking about you last night. I told them how much I love your attitude, work ethics, and services! Thank you, thank you, and thank you! "

*Minh Pham,
Real Estate Investor/Mentor*

- 47) Thank you gifts
- 48) Order promotional items

Secretarial Services

- 49) You want the **phone to be answered personally** when the office is closed. Your VA receives calls routed to her home office phone and your prospective customers do not receive a voice mail. You **pay only for the minutes** that the VA is on the phone, not for her standby time.
- 50) Using new programs which allow remote access to computers, the VA can work on your computer at a distance. Running scans, repairing registries, **updating the system to run better and faster** all can be done remotely. Interactive software is commonly used to allow the VA and your calendar

- to be **on the same page**. **Note:** generally the VA will use her own computer for your work-related items unless there is a specific need for you to have her connect to your computer, such as accessing an industry-specific software program, etc..
- 51) You need to **confirm appointments** for the week. Simply fax or email a list to your VA. She calls the appointments and notes who is confirmed and who must be rescheduled. She faxes or emails the list back to you or even updates your calendar online, if you're using a mutually accessible calendar program. She can even **reschedule appointments** as needed.
- 52) You **need directions** to a meeting or seminar. Your VA makes the call, obtains the directions and either calls or emails those directions to you.
- 53) You **need a schedule** for the meeting times and dates, your VA **can verify** the information for you without taking up your precious time on the phone.
- 54) You have **routine paperwork** that must be filled out on a daily basis. Simply fax your hand-written information to your VA. She enters the info into your standard form and faxes to the proper location.
- 55) To keep your computer files safe, simply make **a back-up tape** of the computer and send it to your VA for safe-keeping. A small task, but well worth it. In the event of a disaster, all your files are located off the premises.
- 56) You travel frequently and need a VA to **coordinate air travel**, car rental and hotel reservations. Your VA can do all of these items and simply email your itinerary back to you.
- 57) By purchasing a software program that installs a desktop electronic billing system on the VA's computer, **billing can be done off-site**. The software vendor technical support trains the VA to use the program, then you email or fax information to the VA, who then does **daily electronic billing** or **accounting services** to get your billing done.

- 58) A VA can **audit banking records**, and review telephone bills, including cell phone records, report any anomalies back to you so you are aware of unusual activity and can correct the problem.
- 59) Your desk is piled with papers, mail and miscellaneous undone tasks. Simply place everything in a box and mail it to your VA. She sorts through it, makes **files and indicates important items** that need to be done, **organizes** by deadline or urgency - and mails the box back to you.
- 60) Write business and task procedures for your business
- 61) Write business manuals for you

"Phenomenal!

You have outdone yourself yet again.

I had faith I could cancel my newspaper ad and still get leads to work with, and you're making it happen. Thanks,"

*Alan B.,
Real Estate Investor/Mentor*

Research

- 62) You need a hotel conference room for a seminar. Call or email your VA and ask her to do the **research**. The VA contacts several hotels in the area to find availability of the date, size, and specifics of the seminar. Your VA obtains **written quotes** from the hotels that can accommodate the request. She VA **reviews each quote** for completeness and reports the findings to you for final decision.
- 63) You to buy office equipment. Simply call or email your VA with the request. She calls several vendors, **obtains pricing information**, and emails the information back to you for the final decision.
- 64) You **need software** for a particular project. Your VA can research the Internet and inquires among business networking groups about such

software. When the appropriate software is identified, the VA reports her findings to you for final decision and selection.

- 65) You are interested in **researching a topic online** for an important proposal. Your VA can do a keyword search and list the appropriate websites/findings back to you. Or she can dig deeper and pull out necessary information from the websites she finds.
- 66) You are **preparing a marketing plan** and need further information. Your VA can contact possible advertising outlets on the Internet, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, etc. and acquire information **on pricing, publishing dates, publishing deadlines**, payment policies, etc. All information is compiled into a report for you to review.

" Hey, thanks! I'm impressed by your diligence and willingness to be flexible with your schedule. And thanks for the heads up about the updates."

*Freddie B..
Real Estate Investor*

Word Processing/Presentations

- 67) You take notes at meetings and need them typed. You simply email, fax, or mail the notes to your VA; she **types the notes** and mails or emails them back to you. The notes can be formatted into **a newsletter** and sent to members if you wish.
- 68) You are preparing a report and need the draft copy to be formatted. You send the document via email attachment to your VA. Your VA **edits and formats** the document and returns the finished report to you via email attachment.
- 69) You write a letter and fax or email it to your VA. She types and edits the letter, prints the letter on your stationery and mails it out. If you want **the same letter personalized to many recipients**, the VA does this as well.

- No need to go out and buy stamps or make a trip to the post office. The VA does this and charges you back for the costs.
- 70) You need **brochures** and a preliminary letter sent to prospective customers. Your VA **prepares mailings** on a daily basis in response to inquiries.
- 71) You are preparing a **seminar** and need a PowerPoint presentation prepared. Simply fax or email sketches of diagrams and charts to your VA. Your VA **prepares the PowerPoint** slides and sends the document back to you via email attachment. You can now use your PowerPoint presentation for your seminar.
- 72) You are **preparing a seminar and need a questionnaire fact sheet** from each participant prior to the seminar. Simply fax your questions along with a list of participants to your VA. She types the questionnaire; calls each participant, obtains their fax number and faxes the questionnaire; tracks each completed questionnaire and calls the participants who did not respond; **summarizes the questionnaire responses** on a report; and

"I am very happy with your company and the service it provides and I'm always looking to tell folks about you. I will continue to spread the good word, because there are many people in my circles that need your help."

*Marcus Lackey,
Real Estate Investor*

- delivers the report to you via email attachment.
- 73) Better still – have your VA design the questionnaire as well.

Data Processing/Database Management

- 74) You have notes for a form. Your VA **takes the preliminary ideas and creates a form** or template for you.
- 75) You are preparing a **direct mailing** and need to verify your database. The database is sent to your VA via email attachment. Your VA

telephones each name and **verifies name**, spelling, title and address. All corrections are made, old names are deleted, and new names are added. The **corrected database** is zipped and returned to you via email attachment.

76) You need email formatted and **email blasts** sent out. The VA can do this for you from your server or a service such as ConstantContact.

77) You are changing database software and **need to convert your databases**. Your VA can handle the conversion for you.

78) You want a VA available by Instant Message whenever you need her. This can be arranged so that the VA can handle **last minute projects** effectively.

79) You need to **send out monthly reports** for customers. The VA keeps a calendar and sends reports in a timely manner and ensures that none are missed.

"I COULD NOT BE HAPPIER with the website you designed!!!! If you don't mind me saying so, it f%#\$%\$g rocks!!!

Hiring you to complete my website was the best money I spent in a long time!! If I tried to do this myself, it would have taken hundreds of additional dollars, dozens upon dozens of additional hours, several bottles of aspirin and a few nervous breakdowns, and I still wouldn't have created a site half as sexy, professional, and useful as the one you seamlessly created in such short order and with little to no direction!!

You're awesome!! I'm glad you are on "my team" and I will definitely tell all my friends what great work you do. Thanks!! :-)

Brian C.

Desktop Publishing

80) You need a **brochure** for your business. Your VA can design, type and print brochure using your own artwork or stock art.

- 81)Your VA can also make the brochure ready to print by a professional print shop and simply email the file to the shop for printing.
- 82)You have a blog, but do not have time to update entries regularly. Brief ideas and thoughts or links can be emailed to your VA, who then **updates your blog.**
- 83)You have items for sale and want to **do an e-bay auction.** You simply take digital photos of the items, and email them with details to your VA, who then sets up the auction, monitors and completes the sale for you.
- 84)You need new **business cards.** Your VA can design and email Kinko's or some other printing service in your own town, which will print business cards and may deliver them to the office. She may even locate an online service such as VistaPrint who can print them more cost effectively and ship them to you.
- 85)You need a **schedule prepared.** Your VA can design, type and prepare flyers such as schedules or calendars.
- 86)You need a website set up, either on a directory site or using a web-hosting service. Your VA can **design a custom site or adapt a template,** and can maintain it on a regular basis, adding current articles or information as needed.
- 87)You want to add autoresponders to your website. Your VA can write and **set-up the autoresponder.** She can also monitor the number of requests and **establish a database** of who is requesting the information.
- 88)You want to fully utilize your email software program (i.e. filters, autoreply, signatures, etc.) Your VA can **"walk you through" the set-up and teach you** HOW while on the telephone and computer at the same time.
- 89)You want to send out a monthly or quarterly newsletter to customers or

I got 2 really good leads from the great work that Jennifer is doing! I'm about to go under contract with one of leads :)"

*Brian S.,
Real Estate Investor*

- members. Your VA can **design and prepare the newsletter**, and arrange printing and mailing, or emailing, on schedule.
- 90) You want to send out postcards to customers advising them of new deals or just as reminders to old customers who have not been in contact for awhile. Your VA can **create the postcards and order** from the fulfillment house for delivery in bulk to your office, her office, or to be labeled and sent out directly.
- 91) You want to find out why old customers are not coming back or why they stopped using your services. The VA can **send a blind survey to a focus group** or list of former customers and get this information back to you.
- 92) Your VA can also **re-activate old customers** by calling with a **prepared script** or sending a **targeted mailing**.

Transcription Services

- 93) You need a telephone conversation (i.e., conference call, teleclass, etc.) recorded. The VA **records the call and transcribes the tape** for the participants.
- 94) You dictate letters and memos on a cassette tape and mail it to your VA via overnight delivery. **Your VA transcribes the tape** prints the letters on your stationery and mails the following day.
- 95) You send recorded cassettes to your VA to transcribe. The VA **types the report** and returns via overnight delivery or via email.
- 96) Send your VA an MP3 file of your recording. She transcribes the audio and emails the completed transcript back to you.

"Oh thank Heaven for you! I am very, very happy with my team so far (Note: Dee has a Team Double-Click tag-team of two admins - Jene O. and Jennifer A.). They are quick learners, proactive, and I love that I get updates now. My life is so much easier. I look forward to this upcoming year already. :-)"

*Dee C.
Real Estate Investor/Broker*

Email Services

97) You cannot keep up with the volume of email and are missing **important messages**. You or your webmaster set up a general email account (info@mycompany.com). Your VA **retrieves all email, sorts, responds** to routine requests, and forwards items of importance to you at your personal email account (myname@mycompany.com).

98) You are going on vacation and don't want to miss important email messages. Your VA downloads all email and notifies individuals that you

Found on internet message board:

"Yep, I'm using teamdoubleclick.com. I've tried several through iva.org and they were all unprofessional. They weren't rude; they just weren't real business owners. They were people who seemed to have decided to become a VA and didn't know how to run their business, let alone help me with mine.

If I found what seemed like a good VA from the IVAA site, the lead VA would refer me out because they'd gotten a large client base and weren't able to keep up the volume. Basically, if a VA was successful, they were too busy to take me on as a client. If they actually had the room in their schedule to add me, they were newbies and this was often their first professional job EVER or the first company they've run.

I found TeamDoubleClick through a yahoo real estate investor group. I like them because they have one lead person who is responsible for procuring professional assistants and making sure they are doing their jobs. They send weekly invoices, take credit cards, and call you every couple months to make sure your assistants are performing well. [Their manager] is very responsive, but then again, the rest of the team is too. Charge is per hour, but they only charge you their actual work time, unlike a regular assistant."

Real Estate Investor

are out of the office. Your VA **contacts you** with urgent messages either while you are out or upon your return – whichever you choose.

- 99) You operate an **ezine/newsletter**. Although many features can be automated, you still receive incorrect subscription requests or failed mail messages. Simply forward all related email messages to your VA to correctly process the requests to **subscribe, unsubscribe or delete** bounced email messages.

Telephone/Fax Services

- 100) You are going on vacation but **need to stay in touch** with important business calls. You or your VA can record on your voice mail that urgent callers may contact your assistant and include your VA's telephone number. Your VA can then contact the you if there are important messages.
- 101) You are leaving on a business trip but don't want the phone to be left unattended. You can activate call forwarding to your VA's telephone and give the VA your business itinerary. Your VA **answers all calls**,

"I realized I couldn't do it all, and any successful business person will incorporate fantastic team members – people that are the best in their field, the best at what they do, to help take some of the load off of us so that we can continue to do what we do best, continue to get creative with our businesses and continue to grow our company."

Kendra Todd, winner of season three of NBC's "The Apprentice", Real Estate Investor, Owner of My House Real Estate, Team Double-Click Client

responds to routine requests, and contacts you with urgent messages.

- 102) You are frequently out of the office or travel and cannot check voice mail on a regular basis. Your VA can call and **retrieve messages from voice mail**, respond to routine requests and contact you if necessary.
- 103) You plan a seminar or conference and need to invite attendees. Your VA can **make the phone calls to key contacts** in the targeted

businesses, give a brief overview of the seminar, and schedule a phone appointment for you to connect with the contact personally.

- 104) You want a **human voice to answer** the phone. Simply purchase a system such as FreedomVoice, which can be set to ring to your VA's office so she can answer in your company name. Whenever the phone rings at the VA's location, calls will be handled, messages will be taken, and appointments scheduled. You **pay for time on the phone, and any follow up tasks - not standby time.**

Internet Services

- 105) You want to **put photographs online** through a service or by creating a personal page. Your VA can scan and resize the photos, then send out an invitation to your designated email list to access the photographs.
- 106) You are trying to **locate a hard to find item**. Using the Internet, your VA can perform a search to try to locate the item.
- 107) You need **changes made to your website**. Your VA can edit or upload new information to your website.
- 108) You need to **promote your website**. Your VA can submit the URL, key words and description to various search engines on a routine basis.
- 109) You want to **increase the number** of subscribers to your electronic newsletter. Your VA can **list the newsletter with a variety of online directories** and follow up to make sure the listings are accurate.
- 110) You want to increase the number of subscribers to your ezine or

"How soon can I get started, what will you need to get started? I am putting together some tasks for you. I am excited about this."

*Demetrius M.
Real Estate Management*

- newsletter. Your VA can contact other list owners of similar subjects to inquire about mutual cross promotion.
- 111) You want to promote your business online. Your VA can **submit articles** written by you to ezines to **increase exposure** of your company.
- 112) You don't have time to monitor website traffic. Your VA can monitor banner ad placements/click thrus and make recommendations for adjustments. She can also **monitor search engine rankings and submit** to search engines.
- 113) You want to sell your business or find an associate. Your VA can submit information to business brokers, place ads, review inquiries. This can be privately managed off-site by someone not involved with the business management in order to maintain confidentiality.
- 114) You want **to sell products** on your website. Your VA can set up a shopping cart and monitor sales reports. Your VA can monitor tests and make recommendations.
- 115) You want to improve website traffic with related links. Your VA can **contact similar websites** and request mutual link exchange.
- 116) You don't have time to monitor your website for errors or broken links. Your VA can **periodically review the website** and verify links.

Bookkeeping

- 117) You need **bill paying services**. You simply have all bills mailed to a post office box near your VA. Your VA sets up a checking account with payment authorization for both you and the VA. As the bills are prepared for payment, your VA notifies you how much money to deposit into the account. The bills are then paid. Another option, if available from your bank, is to use on-line bill payment services. Security features can be set up which make this a safe and simple solution.
- 118) You need **bill paying services plus data entry into accounting software**. Your bills can be mailed to a post office box near your VA, or

you can collect all the bills and mail them to your VA periodically. Your VA can

- a. Set up a checking account with payment authorization for both you and the VA. As the bills are prepared for payment, the VA notifies you how much money to deposit into the account.
- b. Prepare the checks for payment and mail back to you for signature and mailing.
- c. If available from your bank, use on-line bill payment services. As bills are paid, the VA then enters the transactions into accounting software. In addition, the VA can reconcile bank statements, enter credit card transactions, prepare invoices, make and/or enter deposits, and prepare end of month reports.

119) If you require annually or monthly subscription-type invoices due from your membership or clients, the VA can **prepare the invoices and mail** according to schedule. Your VA can also receive payments and deposit into the company account. All transactions are recorded in accounting software and sent to you via FTP transfer or mailed on CD.

120) You have several account receivables that are past due. Your VA can **mail past due notices** or follow up via telephone to **collect on past due** invoices, make payment arrangements; accept credit cards over the phone, etc.

121) You continue to pay your own bills, but need monthly bank reconciliation. You can simply mail a copy of your check register along with the bank statement to your VA. She then **enters all data into accounting software** and reconciles the account. The accounting file is sent back to you via email attachment.

122) You continue to pay your own bills, but need reminders to pay in a timely manner. Your VA can **remind you via email** or telephone when due dates arrive.

- 123) You need monthly **auditing of accounts** payable and receivable, especially if these services are performed by an on-site employee. Your VA can perform these audits.
- 124) Your VA can **make calendar updates** to keep you informed of upcoming obligations and activities.

Purchasing Services

- 125) On a pre-specified basis, the VA can fax you a list of office supplies that are used on a regular basis. You check off what you need and fax the list back to your VA. Your VA **re-orders the supplies** and has them delivered directly to your home or office.
- 126) You need new equipment. After your VA researches the various makes, models, etc., written quotes are sent to you. Upon your authorization, your VA purchases the equipment and arranges for delivery to your home or office. If the item to be purchased requires **on-site setup, the VA can also make those arrangements** as well confirm dates/times and travel information.
- 127) When available, a VA can set-up an online account on your behalf with stores that supply your needed items. When supplies are needed, your VA **places the order with delivery** to your home or office.
- 128) A VA working with your accountant can set up lines of credit with vendors and monitor to **keep the credit information current** and accurate.
- 129) You need to **order marketing materials** (stationery, brochures, envelopes, etc.). Your VA can obtain pricing quotes; coordinate ordering, design, quantity, delivery and payment.

"I see Jennifer got the results we were after. She's great! She did a fabulous job of staying on it too, until she got through. AND she's very friendly and professional."

*Lois M.
Assistant to Real Estate Investor/Mentor*

- 130) You do not have time to keep up with gifts for birthdays and holidays. Your VA can keep track of birthdays and other milestones, research appropriate gifts, suggest those items to you for approval, and coordinate the purchase and delivery of same.
- 131) Your VA can **keep track of birthdays and send out cards** to your customers.

Writing/Editing Services

- 132) You are **preparing a brochure** and need assistance with the copy. Your VA can **write** marketing literature.
- 133) You are **preparing a marketing flyer** and need assistance with the copy. Your VA can **edit** marketing literature.
- 134) You are **preparing a website** and need assistance with the copy. Your VA **can proofread** marketing literature.
- 135) You have prepared a manual that **needs to be edited**. Your VA can type; format, proofread, edit, spell check, and grammar check the documents for you.

Marketing Services

- 136) You implement **an advertising plan or promo**. Your VA can monitor the plan, submits ads by deadlines, track expiration dates, coordinate payment, handle correspondence with advertising vendors, and continually update the advertising report and/or advertising budget report for your review.
- 137) You want to **monitor customer satisfaction**. Your VA can type a customer feedback questionnaire, mail to customers, receive the completed questionnaire, summarize the responses and issue a report to you for review and action.
- 138) You want to send information to a new client. Your VA can prepare a **welcome package** and send it to the new client.

- 139) You would like to **get more referrals**. Your VA can set up lunch appointments with potential referral partners to discuss the arrangements. Your VA can send letters or brochures to potential referral partners to introduce them to your services.
- 140) You set up exhibits at conventions or expos on a regular basis. The VA can **call prospective customers** who have left their name and number, and set appointments for you to follow-up.

Personal Services

- 141) Schedule personal tasks such as car maintenance, order groceries or make flight arrangements
- 142) You have a hard time **remembering birthdays**, anniversaries, etc. The VA can email or telephone you for these important dates.
- 143) You make appointments and then forget to keep them. Your VA can **keep your calendar** and remind you of those dentist/client/significant other appointments, family appointments, classes to take, or project deadlines.
- 144) You're busy and need information on summer camp for your children. Your VA can help research personal items such as these as well.
- 145) Your VA can provide **clipping service**. She can regularly monitor particular newspapers/magazines and clip articles of interest or take a trip to the library and copy specific articles.
- 146) You are **planning a wedding/reunion/backyard barbeque**. Your VA can assist with the invitation list, mailing the invitations, tracking RSVPs, tracking gifts received and even send thank you cards.
- 147) You want to change insurance plans, for auto, home, life or health insurance, or business. Your VA can **research and recommend** which one is the best choice.
- 148) You want to **plan a vacation** but do not have time to research. Your VA can make travel arrangements such as air, hotel and car rental,

- or all-inclusive resorts or cruise comparisons. You might even ask her to plan a romantic get-away for you and your significant other!
- 149) You would like to **promote your speaking career**. Your VA can make appointments with organizations to arrange speaking engagements, send out materials, follow up with inquiries, and **coordinate public relations** such as press releases.
- 150) You want **daily updating** on personal investments, stocks, etc. Your VA can provide this service.
- 151) You would like a **personalized music program downloaded** to a computer or a handheld device. Your VA can perform this task for you.
- 152) You would like to **write a book**, but can't get organized. Your VA can compile rough drafts, notes, fragments, letters or memoirs and get them into an editable form to begin the process of formatting the book, research publishers, and send out queries.
- 153) You would like **audio files uploaded** to a website or set up to be downloaded as a **free report**. Send the files to your VA to upload!

Case Studies of Real Estate Professionals Utilizing the Services of Virtual Assistants

Case Study – Kendra Todd, winner of season three of NBC’s “The Apprentice”, Real Estate Investor, Owner of My House Real Estate, Team Double-Click Client

Ms. Todd’s case study is actually the written transcript of an interview Team Double-Click’s President and CEO Gayle Buske did with Ms. Todd.



Interview with Kendra Todd
08/10/2006

Gayle Buske: Good afternoon. This is Gayle Buske, President and CEO of Team Double-Click Inc. Our guest today is Kendra Todd, winner of NBC’s The Apprentice, Episode 3. The reason we are here with Kendra today is to find out a little bit about her business, and how she is using Virtual Assistants and Virtual Staffing in her business. So I am going to turn it over to Kendra for a little bit, and Kendra why don’t you go ahead and start by telling

us about what you are doing?

Kendra Todd: First, thank you for sharing these few minutes with me. I realized after I won The Apprentice, that I had a wonderful opportunity and I had a great, and growing real estate business, but I realized I couldn’t do it all, and any successful business person will incorporate fantastic team members – people that are the best in their field, the best at what they do, to help take some of the load off of us so that we can continue to do what we do best, continue to get creative with our businesses and continue to grow our company. What led me to find a Virtual Assistant, was that I needed someone very hands on who could manage my database. I have a very large database with lots of people – a couple thousand people in my database. It’s important for any successful business owner to keep in touch with their clients, and email and ezines are a wonderful way to do that. So, I first sought out a Virtual Assistant to help me create emails and email them out to keep in touch with all of my clients. It’s hard to pick up a phone and call several thousand people and say, “Hello, how are you doing?”, but there are some wonderful, wonderful virtual ways in which to have an intimate relationship with your customers, and so that was one of the reasons why I really needed to get a Virtual Assistant.

Gayle Buske: Why virtual as opposed to “bricks and mortar”?

Kendra Todd: Well, a lot of my business is virtual. Internet is virtual, email is virtual. I have a lot of people who work for my company that don't work in my office, and I'm not just talking about my Virtual Assistant. I think that business can really be done on a global level these days. We have the Internet, and email, to help for that. So, I have always been a person who will just get great people on board regardless of where in the country, or where in the world, they are. I don't need somebody "brick and mortar" 5 days a week in my office doing this type of thing. If there is somebody who lives in Chicago, or in Los Angeles, or somewhere else in the country who is the best at what they do, it works perfectly for me because they can have other clients, they can work on my jobs when I need them to. I don't need to pay somebody full time; I just pay somebody on a project basis.

Gayle Buske: It's interesting that you should say that, too, because do you feel too that a lot of times people actually do work virtually, but they just don't realize it? Even large corporations have an office in Virginia, and an office in California. Those two offices, **Gayle Buske, cont:** while each office may be large, they're working virtually with one another, and I think a lot of people don't realize that. Do you run into that same thing?

Kendra Todd: Oh, absolutely! I communicate and email more with my transaction coordinator who's right next door, in the office next door, than I do by walking over and talking to her. So, even inter-office, there is so much business that occurs virtual. I think that it's important to be able to have that mind set to know what's important is to create the best team possible. They don't have to live in the same zip code, or be able to come into your office. I built my team on the premise that I just want the best people at what they do, regardless of where they are.

Gayle Buske: How long have you been using Virtual Assistants, and working virtually?

Kendra Todd: I have been using Virtual Assistants, and working virtually probably for coming up on two years now. I don't have to tell you, my business partner came to me and said, "Kendra, you can't do it all, and you need a Virtual Assistant.", and I said "What the heck is that?" I am so glad that I found out, because now I couldn't imagine doing my business any other way.

Gayle Buske: It is amazing what technology has done in the last few years. Even 10 years ago it would have been difficult to work virtually, but now you can do Go To Meeting which allows you to view someone else's screen. That becomes important, too, with all the terrorist threats these days, and the restrictions with flying, its nice to be able to still meet with someone over the phone like we are now, or using Go To Meeting, and be able to pull all that together without being right there face to face.

Kendra Todd: Absolutely. My real estate businesses, most of my clients, live everywhere but south Florida, so most of my business with my own customers is done over the phone and over the Internet. What I have discovered with Team Double-Click is that not only are you all able to help me manage my database and do email campaigns, but you have people waiting in the wings to be able to coordinate with me to write phone scripts, and help call and update contact information, and then follow-up with my clients. I mean, the possibilities are endless. I'm really excited about all the different services I haven't even tried yet, but I know I need. I didn't even realize how much help was out there virtually until you all shared with me the abilities that you had to help me in these different ways.

Gayle Buske: And it is amazing how many talented people there are in the world. We work mainly with U.S. based Virtual Assistants, but it goes beyond that, too. We get people coming to us that have B.A.'s, M.B.A.'s - every manner of degree imaginable. They are so much happier working from home, too, that I think they do a better job for our clients, which is really neat to see in action. They have the determination, and some of the late nights that people put in, and you don't hear them complain. Most people, if they were stuck at someone's office building, if one of our V.A.'s was stuck at your office until 10:00 at night, they'd probably be rather disgruntled if that happened day after day. What we find with people working from home, they are more than happy to do those late nights, and late hours, because they can still see their family, and they are there where it's comfortable. That's pretty cool, too.

What would you recommend to other companies looking to hire staff? Would you recommend that they go "bricks and mortar" people, or would you recommend that they go Virtual Assistants?

Kendra Todd: That's an interesting question. I really think that it depends on the services that you need. Also, every business owner is different, has a different comfort level doing different types of business transactions over the phone. Like for myself, as an example, I feel more comfortable having a bookkeeper come into my office every other week, so I can sit down and go over the bills, and do certain things with her. Other people I know in the industry do it virtually. I think everyone is different, and the thing that is wonderful is that there are services out there to pick and choose from.

Gayle Buske: Ok. That makes a lot of sense. I know most people are more comfortable having a bookkeeper come in. As a real good example, while regular Virtual Assistants or web design is more comfortable...

Kendra Todd: Exactly. Then there are other people who are the opposite. So, the point is that, you could do all of your services virtually if you wanted to. That's an amazing concept, and that's an amazing thought. Most people, and most business owners, that have stumbled upon and realized the tremendous

value of using Virtual Assistants, realize they can outsource a lot of the things that they were doing themselves to a Virtual Assistant and help increase their business. There are so many things that you just don't need to do in your office. A lot of those things you don't even realize until somebody comes to you and says, "I could really help you with this." Then you say, "Gosh, I didn't think about that."

Gayle Buske: You bet. There are so many things. Like I said, there are so many talents available. Can you tell us, in your opinion, how do Team Double-Click's services compare to other Virtual Assistant companies that you checked out in your hiring process?

Kendra Todd: I can tell you just by comparing my experience so far with Team Double-Click vs. us working with Virtual Assistants in the past, it's like night and day. When I was seeking out a new Virtual Assistant, it's because I was frustrated with the lack of communication I had in the past with Virtual Assistants. I couldn't be more impressed, and more thrilled with the level of follow-up, the level of expertise and knowledge, and just the numerous different people who are there to help me. If I call and say, "I have a project I need help on. Do you have someone in your team who can help me?", and I literally, like some of my projects, have two and three Virtual Assistants with Team Double-Click doing different things. Its amazing. I don't have to rely on one Virtual Assistant to get through with one project to go onto the next. That's exciting to be able to multi-task, and Team Double-Click does that, and I haven't found another company like it.

Gayle Buske: How did it compare for you, too, when you were first talking to, Susan (I believe is your Sales Associate) in the actual process of getting a Virtual Assistant? Did you have to go through interviewing several people, or was she able to make that match for you right off the bat?

Kendra Todd: She was able to make the match right off the bat, which is a rarity in my world. We just hit the ground running, and everybody that has worked with us has just been so knowledgeable. There's not one person with Team Double-Click that I've worked with, that I wouldn't work with again.

Gayle Buske: Super! That's awesome. I know you're busy, and we'll let you go here soon. I do have to ask you to tell us about Risk, and Grow Rich. It sounds like a fantastic book. Tell us what it's all about.

Kendra Todd: After winning The Apprentice, I realized that I had a pretty great opportunity to spread a positive message. So, my business partner and I wrote Risk, and Grow Rich to inspire people to overcome their fears of failure, to learn to embrace and understand and lower their risk factors, and go out there and turn their dreams into realities. The happiest people I know are the people who love what they do with their time.

Gayle Buske: Oh, you are absolutely right.

Kendra Todd: Yes. I have met so many people who have been inspired by reading the book that it just makes my day, every time. Hopefully, I've done a good thing. The book really does – really gets you to think about your relationship to taking risks. I think that is really important, because we are always improving and we're always learning about ourselves along the path of life. If this book can make you think, and help you improve on that, then I've done a good thing.

Gayle Buske: Do you have any other books in the works now that you can tell us about?

Kendra Todd: I don't have any other books in the works right now. I am working on a product line for Real Estate Investors, workbook and audio tapes, and a few other things to help people make their first million in real estate.

Gayle Buske: Oh, fantastic! Is that available on one of your websites?

Kendra Todd: It will be in a couple of months. We're still in the development stage, but I'm really excited about that.

Gayle Buske: Ok. Super. What website should they look at?

Kendra Todd: They can go to kendratodd.net.

Gayle Buske: Ok, kendratodd.net. Super. Then folks can keep an eye out there, and see when that's ready to go. I think that will be fantastic. We work with a lot of Real Estate Investors, too, and the more information and the more knowledge they can have, the further they go. You've done so well for yourself. You're age again; correct me if I'm wrong, you are 27?

Kendra Todd: Last year I was. I like that you just made me a year younger. I'm 28 now, but still, I'm under 30, and I'm sticking with it.

Gayle Buske: For what you've accomplished in such a short time is phenomenal. Everything that you've done is just amazing, so I think people can get a lot of good advice from both your book, and whatever you end up putting together for real estate investors, too.

Kendra Todd: Well, take my advice; hire Team Double-Click, because I don't know what I would do without a Virtual Assistant. Actually, now I've got a team of Virtual Assistants now with you guys, and it makes such a tremendous difference in my business.

Gayle Buske: Well, thank you! I'm very glad to hear that. Those are the kinds of things we strive to hear, and we've taken great pains to make ourselves user friendly – so to speak – for small and in-home based businesses or anyone that wants to remain virtual. It's good to hear those things. We've put a lot of effort into it, and we've worked very, very hard to build a fantastic team, and we really do, our VA's are fantastic. They go through a really rigorous screening and interview process. Not everyone makes it through, but the ones that do we know come out the other side and they're very good, and they're the ones that are going to illicit compliments like the ones that you just gave. Our core team, I couldn't ask for better. We were able to take a three-week vacation this summer, and we've never in our lives been able to do that. The only way we could is because we have such a fantastic team. They kept everything running fantastic. We wouldn't have had to come back, they were doing that good, and that's a neat feeling. It's good to hear that everybody has taken good care of you, and they do with all of our clients, whether it's someone that only needs an hour or two a week, or somebody that needs 40 or 60 hours a week. So, that's good to hear. I appreciate that.

Kendra Todd: Oh, yeah. You guys have created a phenomenal business, and I'm really grateful, and thankful.

Gayle Buske: Well, thank you! Well, I know you're busy, so we'll you get back to making more millions and helping others do the same. I appreciate you taking the time with us today, Kendra.

Kendra Todd: Oh, anytime! Anytime. Thank you very much for everything you guys have done for me.

Case Study - Minh Pham, Real Estate Investor/Mentor



Problem: "The problem I had was that of needing an assistant without having to open an office to accommodate her," reports Pham. "I could have opened a traditional office space and staffed it traditionally, but that doesn't fit me or my business model." Pham is a night owl and likes to work at his own hours. You'll often find him up at 1:00 or 2:00 am working on a task or talking to a student. He also enjoys the flexibility of being able to start work at his time of day - not having to report to the office

to let a staff in the door.

Pham also reported needing an admin he could rely on, someone who could take phone calls and do other tasks. Pham did have a semi-virtual admin whom he met with once a week but otherwise worked from her own home. However, she wouldn't take phone calls and didn't really want to be in the role of an administrative assistant, according to Pham.

Action: "My action? I hired Team Double-Click!" says Pham. Team Double-Click is a virtual staffing agency with virtual administrative assistants located all around the U.S.

Result: "I'm very happy with my arrangement and with my admin. She's very dependable and has even helped me grow my business." Explains Pham. Pham reports that working with a virtual assistant as opposed to a bricks-and-mortar assistant fits his business model perfectly without having to go out and rent an office space or hire staff traditionally. "It's all about enjoying it." Pham remarks. "Now, I've got the infrastructure I need without expense of setting up an office or have the rigidity of that infrastructure."

About Minh: Minh Pham is formally trained as a financial planning strategist for small businesses and individuals within the Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. areas. Minh is also recognized as a real estate investment lecturer on the topics of creative real estate investing. He is the author of a Best-Selling Course, "Turnkey Profits Using Lease Purchase and Other Creative Investing Techniques." He is also on the Board of two real estate investing associations in the Greater Metro Washington DC area.

Pham owns eight real estate investing companies: Phamtastic Properties, LLC; Phamtastic Investors, LLC, Secure Investments, LLC, S & P Investments, LLC, Real Estate Investment Specialists, LLC, Walking on Water, LLC; Phamtastic Investments, Inc., - where he buys and sells between four to seven residential properties per month utilizing his honed investing techniques and no-money-down strategies; and Guarantee Profits, LLC, - where he mentors his seminar-student-investors with profitable real estate transactions.

Pham is also a member of the National Speakers Association and is a highly sought after speaker on the topics of creative real estate investing, comprehensive wealth management, and personal achievement via goal-making and strategic implementation. Currently, he serves as an adjunct professor for the Continuing Education Programs at Prince George's Community College. Pham has nearly ten years of experience presenting dynamic, informative educational seminars and workshops to both the general public and private sector.

Case Study - Alan Brymer, Real Estate Investor



Problem: Brymer reports, "I was overwhelmed with work and other assignments to do. I was trying to do it all myself, and was neglecting the things that only I could do. As a result, I didn't do any one thing really well." While Brymer's business was doing well, he was working 10-11 hours a day and spending a lot of time doing tasks he knew could be delegated. Brymer admits, "I didn't know how [to delegate]." He had a difficult time finding anyone to work for him that he could trust. "Plus," he adds, "It would have been weird to have a lady come to my house and work in my spare bedroom/office. And, what if she wanted to work a certain amount of time per week and I just didn't have enough work for her, or too much for her? Suffice it to say, I had problems."

Action: Brymer hired two part time virtual assistants, Lori and Jene, who began working for him immediately. "I immediately gave them tasks to do, and we figured out together the smartest way to get the job done." Brymer explains. "They handle all the outbound calls and letters for me, so my lead generation is on auto-pilot." Brymer has taken the use of his virtual assistants one step further by having them and him write down these systems as they make them, and then everyone has them for an easy reference. These reference materials will then become the basis for the framework of Brymer's company should he later decide to expand or teach his business.

Result: "I can ask them to do time-consuming tasks, and we get more done." reports Brymer. "They have found me more deals and made me more money than I was making myself." He adds, "They have paid for themselves many times over and made work easier, but most importantly, they have given me MY LIFE BACK!"

About Alan: Gladstone Enterprises was started in with the purpose in mind of getting out of the rat race-or rather, never getting into it. Alan Brymer, a full-time college student, realized that he was on the path toward completing his degree with honors, finding a promising white-collar job, and working his way up the corporate ladder. And nothing could have been worse!

You see, he believed that being a nameless drone with a fixed income in a cubicle someplace 1½ hours from his home was not the ideal way to spend half of his waking life. He had many job opportunities awaiting him, but none of them appeared stimulating, let alone rewarding. It seemed that the things he wanted most in a career (freedom, creativity, and fun) were not available by taking the same path as his classmates. That path only offered a grueling commute, an inflexible schedule, and a complete lack of control over his life. "There must be some other way," he wondered.

While seeking that way of gaining the financial freedom he desired, he quickly discovered real estate as the means to accomplish his goals. Alan stopped attending most of his classes and spent the majority of his time reading about buying, selling, and renting houses. In a short period of time, he went through dozens of books, tapes, and courses, and used the remainder of his college savings to attend half a dozen real estate seminars and conferences.

When school got out, rather than finding an hourly job to save for his senior year, he dedicated the summer of 2003 to finding houses. After 3 months of searching, struggle, and many mistakes, he bought and sold his first house, which completely paid for his final year of college and left him convinced that "this real estate stuff really works."

By the next spring, Alan had bought and sold several more, but had also made some mistakes with hard-hitting financial consequences. He had made money

but lost it all, and went into a crippling depression which hurt his studies, halted his investing, and lasted three months.

As he sat through his graduation ceremony, he knew he faced one of the biggest and farthest-reaching decisions of his life. Should he give up and give in, or suck it up and get to work? He thought about the things he wanted most and saw no other way to have them than to keep on trying what he knew inside really could work.

So, living in his parents' basement with \$92 in his bank account, he went at it full-time, working odd jobs painting and pulling weeds to support himself and make money for advertising. He knew that taking one of the job opportunities offered to him would be a temporary solution, but would not help him or his future family in the long run. He pressed on and began finding a house every month or so. He still didn't really know what he was doing, and made plenty of mistakes that cost him potential profits. But along the way, he found private lenders to finance his deals, became skilled at speaking with sellers, and deepened his understanding not only of real estate, but of running a business as well.

A little over a year later, Alan was living in his own house, had paid off his credit card debt, and was buying 2 houses per month. Gladstone Enterprises had incorporated and was showing large profits for the first time. A dream team of a skilled and dependable contractor, Realtor, CPA, loan officer, and title company had been built. Alan was invited to speak at the meetings of Real Estate Investment Groups, and positioned himself as a mentor to train and help others. As the workload increased, assistants were hired. The company had finally gone from a bumbling one-man show to a team that was getting results, and well on its way to reaching its full potential, the way Alan envisioned it.

Gladstone Enterprises will buy and sell more houses until it is taking care of over 60 per year. It will continue to grow, hiring more people who are motivated yet

laid back, take their work seriously yet love a good laugh, see the big picture yet achieve daily goals, and who are conversational yet real. It will keep getting more and more streamlined until each person's work is done with a minimum of time-wasting, confusion, and frustrations-becoming a source of freedom, creativity, and fun for Alan, Lori, Wayne, Jene, and anyone else willing to come along for the ride.

Comparison Virtual Staffing v. Bricks-and-Mortar Staffing

| Category | Virtual Staffing | Bricks-and-Mortar | Advantage |
|-------------|--|--|--------------------|
| Flexibility | Anytime, anywhere, 24/7/365 matching of business need to contractor skill. | Open 9-5, Monday through Friday | ✓ Virtual Staffing |
| Time | Can locate local and remote staff in a matter of hours in all time zones. Typically takes at least a day or two to locate local contractors. | Typically, no access to remote contractors. | ✓ Virtual Staffing |
| Cost | The cost of locating qualified staff is negligible. Costs are already being paid: Internet access, computer, phone line, fax, etc. | An office must be rented, upgraded. Insurance must be bought for the premises, an alarm system; business property tax must be paid, property management fees, and so on. Overhead costs such as heat, electricity, and so on, must also be paid prior to making your first dollar. | ✓ Virtual Staffing |
| Service | Virtual staffing embraces the small and home-based business owner and their growing needs. These “small businesses” are the ones that DRIVE the economy. | Many bricks-and-mortar staffing agencies will not work will not even return calls of small business owners, or will treat them like “second class citizens” because they don’t have big bank accounts. | ✓ Virtual Staffing |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------|
| Service Area | Virtual staffing agencies break geographical barriers with access to qualified help across the US, and are not limited to a particular city, state, or region of the country. | Bricks-and-mortar staffing agencies are limited to recruiting within a local radius. | ✓ Virtual Staffing |
| Environmental impact | Virtual staffing helps encourage both workers and employers to work from home/maximize the time they work at home, thus keeping their vehicles (and consequently emissions!) off the roads. | No positive impact/difference. | ✓ Virtual Staffing |
| Employee/ Employer Relationship | Virtual staffers are contractors. That means that they are NOT employees. There are no payroll costs or processes, benefits, or legal obligations. | Staffers who work bricks-and-mortar are typically employees. They legally work for the company, and as such, the company must pay for payroll processing, benefits, sick days, holiday pay, costs associated with withholding tax, social security tax, unemployment tax, etc. | ✓ Virtual Staffing |

Conclusion

Virtual assistants are here to stay. The preceding case studies show that virtual assistants can and do work well for most small and home-based businesses, especially in the real estate industry.

Over the next couple of years you can expect your conversations with regards to virtual assistants to go from “what is a virtual assistant and what does a virtual assistant do” to that of “who provides your virtual assistant services?”

Implementing the use of a virtual assistant, especially through a virtual staffing agency, is a low-cost, low-risk undertaking. If the virtual assistant doesn't work out, you simply request another, perhaps better fit. What's more, coupling the use of a virtual assistant (or several virtual assistants) with your already up-and-coming business can catapult your income and success to the next level and beyond.

What will happen to the individual real estate professionals' businesses when virtual assisting is implemented on a wide scale?

Will your business be on the forefront of this cost-saving, phenomenon of efficiency?

About Team Double, Click, Inc.

Team Double-Click, Inc. provides professional virtual office assistants and professional real estate virtual assistants for small and home-based businesses. We are a virtual staffing agency, working with hundreds of the best professional virtual office assistants the world has to offer. Team Double-Click offers its clients cost-effective solutions to inflexible bricks-and-mortar staffing by staffing virtually.

We don't just tell you where you can find a virtual assistant. We assess your needs and match you with one of our highly-skilled and Team Double-Click trained virtual assistants. And then we monitor and nurture that relationship so you get the most out of hiring virtually. Think of us as your virtual human resources department!

Team Double-Click employs one of the most stringent interviewing and screening process in the industry when looking for virtual assistants to serve our real estate clients. Why? Because virtual assistants come in so many shapes, sizes, prices, and skill levels that it can be difficult to find exactly what you need. We remove all the guesswork by handling the screening and finding the undesirables for you so you don't have to deal with them.

After we know that we have a good foundation - a good person to work with - we require that all of our real estate virtual assistants take and pass one of our real estate virtual assistant certification courses.

What do they learn? They learn how to better assist you, as a real estate professional, to help you grow your business and to help shoulder your day-to-day administrative burdens. They learn about the latest technologies that help facilitate virtual working and they learn what most real estate clients expect. In other words, we take that person with a good foundation and we hone her into a top-notch real estate virtual assistant.

Our service doesn't stop after a virtual assistant is assigned to our real estate clients. We take things a couple steps further and coach each real estate virtual assistant one-on-one to help her serve you even better as time goes on.

It's important to remember that we may not always be able to offer you a real estate virtual assistant with years and years of experience working virtually. Virtual working simply hasn't been around that long. And besides, if you've ever called the individual virtual assistant shops that pop up on an internet search, you know that if they're any good at what they do they already have all the work they need and can't possibly take on another client such as yourself.

That's why Team Double-Click implemented such an extensive screening and training process, so that even the newest, most inexperienced virtual assistant can be as good as or better than a virtual assistant with years of experience. In short, Team Double-Click has taken the virtual assistant industry and standardized it so that each client receives the same level of quality and service regardless of how "new" his or her virtual assistant is.

Team Double-Click's screening and training process sets the standards by which other virtual assistants are measured. You don't have to weed through different rate structures, retainer fees, and abilities when you come to Team Double-Click for your virtual needs. Each service we offer carries its own price tag, with no retainer fee, regardless of which one of our virtual assistants we match you with.

So why settle for anything less than a Team Double-Click, TCRE-certified virtual assistant?