



FROM  
NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLING  
AUTHOR

**MICHAEL  
HYATT**

THE  
**VIRTUAL  
ASSISTANT**  
SOLUTION

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COME UP FOR AIR  
OFFLOAD THE WORK YOU HATE  
**FOCUS ON WHAT YOU DO BEST**

FOREWORD BY **BRYAN MILES**, CEO OF **eaHELP**

# **The Virtual Assistant Solution**

*Come up for Air, Offload the Work You Hate,  
and Focus on What You Do Best*

**Michael Hyatt**



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To Tricia Welte, my first virtual assistant,  
who helped shoulder the load so  
I could focus on those things I do best

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# Foreword

*By Bryan Miles, Founder of eaHELP*

As the CEO and cofounder of [eaHELP](#), not much shocks me when I look behind the scenes of a high-capacity leader. The good, the bad, the ugly—I've pretty much seen it all. Most often when leaders work as hard as they possibly can and still don't produce the expected results, one of two personas emerge.

## Two Personas—Which Are You?

The first persona is the narcissistic Me Monster. That's the person who truly believes life is all about them and their endeavors. These types of leaders achieve a lot but usually at the expense of others, who are left strewn behind them. They typically deal with high turnover and hurt feelings—but that's business as usual for the dreaded Me Monster, just part of “getting stuff done.”

eaHELP has worked with plenty of Me Monsters and tamed them so that we serve them well. Coaching a Me Monster is a goat rodeo, but it's worth it because these leaders are changing the world.

The second persona is a humble leader who is just flat out of breath but willing to get the kind of help necessary to creatively achieve more than they could on their own. They know they can achieve more if they are free to focus on what only they can do and leave the rest to someone else. These leaders are very driven and wish to get ahead and produce results, but they are humble and their humility attracts people who naturally want to work hard for them.

Enter Michael Hyatt.

You guessed it! Persona number 2!

Michael is one of the nation's top bloggers, a nationally known speaker, a *New York Times* bestselling author, and the former chairman and CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers. Bottom line, this guy is a leader of leaders.

Michael is not only a person I am lucky enough to call a friend, but over the past two years I've had a front-row seat (and a back-stage pass) to how he gets things done. He's a critical thinker and a constant student of systems and processes. Best of all, he cares for his team. People love to work with him.

Regardless of the type of persona you feel you are, you are probably reading this ebook because you need help growing your business, and you are likely willing to make a change to bring on a new team member in an administrative capacity.

## What You'll Learn

This ebook is pure gold to an industry that is still in its infancy. It represents a proven perspective from a person who decided to fully embrace the idea of working with a virtual assistant. You will see how Michael:

- realized all that a virtual assistant could do for him—at less cost than a traditional assistant;
- navigated his questions and concerns about using a virtual assistant;
- worked through the initial first ninety days with his virtual assistant;
- maximizes his productive output with his virtual assistant, using tools and apps that you can

employ immediately.

I have closely worked with a virtual assistant for close to a decade now. I'm still learning, and working with Michael has taught me some new ideas and perspectives.

With my wife Shannon, who cofounded eaHELP with me, I am blessed to help serve leaders all over the world with a daily, real, meaningful, tech-savvy service. When we serve leaders well, they are empowered to produce the result they were called to produce (e.g. pastors, CEOs, executive directors, business owners, midlevel managers, authors, consultants, TV personalities, franchise operators, doctors, attorneys, speakers, and more), which makes the world a better place.

Three years ago, we started eaHELP to serve others. As the CEO of this great company, I believe we are living up to our mission and values. Michael's experience in this ebook is living proof.

The way of the old-school, on-site secretary is a thing of the past. Pull up a chair, get a pen and a fresh notepad ready, and bring an open mind. Before you know it, you will be doing what only you can do for your business and creating amazing results.

# Introduction

## Why I Chose a Virtual Assistant

If you have followed my journey from corporate CEO to full-time writer and speaker, you know I am a big advocate of using virtual assistants. Today I couldn't survive without mine. In fact, I have more than fourteen people working with me on a virtual basis. But I wasn't always a fan.

Frankly, my first experience was terrible. As CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers I had an executive assistant just steps away, but I hired a virtual assistant as an experiment. I should have known better. The service was cheap, and I got what I paid for. It didn't take long before I dropped it.

Fast forward to 2011, when I left corporate life. I figured I could manage the workload of a solo entrepreneur by myself. Boy, was I wrong. Before long I was spending all day, every day mired in administrative detail—responding to emails, making travel plans, filling out expense reports. *Ugh*. Didn't I leave all of this behind?

It was my first time in more than a decade without an executive assistant. I clearly took the role for granted, not realizing how much my assistant freed me to do what I do best. What was I supposed to do now?

At first I decided to just power through it. But that didn't work. The tennis balls came over the net faster than I could hit them. My email volume alone doubled within ninety days of entrepreneurship. Next, I tried to enlist my wife, Gail, to help. Bad idea. She already had a full-time job as a homemaker, mom, and counselor to countless women. She was busier than I was.

Finally, I determined that I needed to get serious about a solution—and fast. I needed to take a different approach if I was going to get my head above water. That determination led me to take six steps.

### 6 Steps to Better Success

1. *I decided I had to make a change.* This might sound trivial, but it's an essential step. People don't enjoy feeling overwhelmed, but you wouldn't always know it from their actions. They might complain about their workload, but they are unwilling to do things differently. Not me. I could see the cliff I was headed for, and I knew the only thing that would work was a change in course. I couldn't count on learning to fly.

2. *I identified my three high-payoff activities.* I did this by asking these questions:

- What is it that only I can do?
- Where do I add the most value?
- What is really important as opposed to merely urgent?

For me, the answer to all three are writing, speaking, and consulting—in that order. Anything else is a waste of what I have been given.

3. *I identified my three biggest productivity sinkholes.* This was easy. For me, the sinkholes are booking my own travel, responding to email, and meeting with acquaintances who want my advice. I hate the first, feel some accomplishment with the second, and really enjoy the third. But all three eat into my productive time. There are more demands than there are me. I decided I had to eliminate—or at least dramatically reduce—these activities.

4. *I spent time reviewing the productivity basics.* In *The 4-Hour Workweek* Tim Ferriss says the

key to productivity is elimination, automation, and delegation. Some stuff is just not worth doing. Other stuff can be put on autopilot. Most of the rest can be delegated. Having transitioned into the role of an entrepreneur, I needed to reevaluate these things in my new position.

5. *I did the math.* Unfortunately, I had fallen into a common trap: I was thinking that if I *could* do something I *should* do it—myself. It’s an easy mistake, but if you can make \$50 an hour, is it smart to do tasks you can hire someone else to do for \$12? I don’t think so. Worse than bad math, it’s bad stewardship.

6. *I hired a virtual assistant.* I knew I didn’t need a full-time assistant permanently parked outside my office door. But I needed someone who could help me stay focused on my high-payoff activities by keeping me out of the sinkholes. Thankfully, I met Bryan Miles and was introduced to [eaHELP](#). Unlike my previous experience, working with an eaHELP virtual assistant has changed my life for the better—it also showed me how my previous experience could have been more successful.

Just going through the first five steps had a positive impact on my attitude—not to mention my business. But what really did the magic was the sixth. Hiring my virtual assistant was the change I needed.

You may be ready for the same change. I’m willing to bet you are.

## The Change You Need

The term “virtual assistant” means a lot of things to a lot of different people. To be clear, I’m talking about someone who works remotely and with whom you contract for professional services like clerical work, meeting and event planning, project management and coordination, even marketing and social media. The idea is having help that fits your needs, your schedule, and your budget. And you can have it without the constraints of payroll, benefits, and recruiting.

Authors, coaches, consultants, creatives, doctors, entrepreneurs, executives, nonprofit leaders, lawyers, pastors, professors, and speakers—there’s a long list of people who could benefit from a virtual assistant.

But despite how many people could benefit, I’ve noticed that many are reluctant to take the plunge. As a result, they miss getting the help they need. Maybe that’s you. Maybe you think hiring a full-time, in-office assistant is your only option. Maybe you have no experience with virtual assistance (or have had a bad experience like I did) and don’t think it can work for you.

It can.

This book will clear up the misconceptions and allow you to be more effective with your time and talents. It will equip you to understand the dynamics of a virtual workforce, define how one or more virtual assistants can help you accomplish more than you ever thought possible, and offer practical advice on how to hire, integrate, and fully benefit from your new virtual staff. Here’s how we’ll do it:

- *Chapter 1* offers seven key indicators to help you determine if you need a virtual assistant. The greater number that are true for you, the greater likelihood you could benefit by choosing a virtual assistant today.
- *Chapter 2* compares virtual assistants to traditional, full-time, in-office assistants. There are a lot of pluses to both, but without question the flexibility and specialization provided by virtual assistants makes them a better fit for the needs of today’s entrepreneurs.
- *Chapter 3* explains what a virtual assistant can do for you, the tasks and functions you can delegate so you can focus on the high-payoff activities that drive your success.
- *Chapter 4* answers the most common questions about virtual assistants—expectations, typical

skillsets, contracts, and so on.

- *Chapter 5* is all about how to get the most from your virtual assistant. My first experience with a virtual assistant was a failure because I didn't know the material in this chapter. It'll save you a lot of grief.
- *Chapter 6* gives you a toolkit of apps and services you can use to stay in sync with your virtual assistant.
- Finally, the appendix by Bryan Miles will help you develop a virtual assistant job description tailor made for your unique circumstances.

## **The Winning Choice**

Time is scarce, and you're wasting your talents if you're spending them on low-payoff activities. If you need an operational definition of failure, that's it. Success, on the other hand, comes when we spend our time and talent on high-payoff activities. We all know this, but sometimes we fail to see the traps in the road.

The surest way to derail your efforts is to get bogged down in all the *important* details of your business to the detriment of the *essentials*. It took me months to break out of this pattern after going entrepreneur, but I had to or I would fail.

So do you. It's time for a change.

## Why You Need a Virtual Assistant

When you visit the doctor, one of the first things they do is check your vitals—blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and respiratory rate. Depending on the reason for the visit, they might also check a few other things, including trying to gauge your pain.

Well, roll up your sleeve and take a few deep breaths. I'm no doctor, but there are vitals we can check in business too, particularly if you're experiencing pain in areas that are hurting your performance. Here are seven key indicators to determine if you need a virtual assistant.

### 1. You're Overwhelmed by Your Workload

If you're buried in your job, here's a secret—there are only twenty-four hours a day. How you spend them determines the quality of the work and ideas you bring to the table.

We all have seasons when there's more work than time, seasons when we have to push through and make it happen. But they should be seasons—as in, periods that eventually *stop*. If being constantly overwhelmed is the norm for you, if you're always trying to do everything on your own, you will drown in your own success.

To be at the top of your game, you need to be alert, healthy, and clearheaded. You can't do that if you are always worrying about how you will keep all the balls in the air. Being overwhelmed doesn't make you a bad person. It's a sign of your success. So adjust your process to ensure you can continue to be successful.

### 2. You Need Help Digging Out from the Administrative Pile

When you are just starting out, you have to do everything. If you need to book an airline ticket, you go online to do it. If you need to make an appointment, you pick up the phone or send an email. This is normal in the first days and months of any new venture. But there comes a time when it's no longer sustainable.

Not every leader needs to be an administrative genius. In fact, being a leader and an administrator are usually at odds with one another. The leader operates from vision and what could be. The administrator operates from procedural manuals and works within what is. Both personalities provide a necessary balance to achieve equilibrium—but usually not in the same person.

If you find the billing, email, scheduling, transcription, whatever, to be eating away the time you could be using to grow your business, it's time to get a virtual assistant.

### 3. You Want to Be More Productive and Less Stressed

Productivity is not about doing more stuff; it's about doing the right stuff. Squeezing more tasks into an already cramped day is a killer if they're the wrong kind of tasks. And many of them are.

If you were honest with yourself, you could quickly list three to five things right now that are hindering you from maximizing the time you do have. You don't need more to do. You need better-ordered time to invest in the things that really matter and will help you achieve your personal and organizational objectives.

Stress is caused by a lot of things, but one of them is feeling like you can't get ahead no matter how hard you work. The solution is simple: stop. Let somebody else work on the things that are

holding you back.

#### **4. You're Not Focusing on What Only You Can Do**

There are certain things that only you can do. No one can give a presentation like you do. No one can negotiate contracts, make the pitch, or create new products like you do. Whatever type of business you are in, there are things only you can accomplish. If you're not focused on these, you're in trouble.

If you've never had an assistant before, you might think you're looking to clone yourself. This is a mistake. The point is not for you to do less of everything. The point is for you to do less of what others can do for you. The most important thing is to think about yourself first. As I mentioned in the introduction, I focus on three things: writing, speaking, and consulting. I can delegate the rest.

Why are you spending your valuable time doing things a virtual assistant could help you accomplish? A good rule of thumb is if you can teach someone else to do a task, you shouldn't spend your time doing it. The best use of your time is to focus on those things only you can do. Outsource or offload the rest to a virtual assistant.

#### **5. You Need Help But Can't Afford Someone Full-Time**

Headcount is always an issue in business. Whether it's a small shop or a major corporation, businesses can be reluctant to take on new employees—especially in administrative positions. Mission-critical jobs are the primary focus.

This is where a virtual assistant can be a big help. When you hire a virtual assistant, you buy blocks of time. In other words, you get only what you need. Why pay someone forty hours of every week when you only need someone for fifteen?

If you are in a business that has seasonal spikes in workflow, a virtual assistant model allows you to scale up and down as needed to keep your costs in line with revenue. This is not true for a regular employee who becomes a fixed cost—and sometimes a dead weight—regardless of the revenue.

#### **6. You Can't Afford the Hassle of Recruiting, Hiring, and Training**

Hiring people is risky business. It takes time, which is already in short supply. If you hire the wrong person, it's harder than ever to fire them in our litigious society. And if you are hiring for someone who needs to physically sit in your office, then you limit your labor pool to a small geographical area. If the person and talent you need lives in another city or state, you have to determine whether or not you can afford relocating that person—if they are even willing and open to the idea.

I have two words for you: massive headache.

Working with a virtual assistant company ensures the people you are matched with have already been extensively screened. They are already comfortable with the technology you use. And if the personality fit isn't great, you can quickly switch to another assistant. That's not the case with a traditional employee.

#### **7. You Need More Margin in Your Life**

If there was ever an indicator of your need for a virtual assistant, the need for more margin is one. You can't spend every day living it to the max. You'll burn up and flame out. What you love to do will become the very thing you hate doing most.

Margin is like a savings account—only instead of money, it's full of creativity, energy, psychological well being, and perspective. Without it, you will not bring the best ideas to the table.

You will not continue to innovate. You will not be able to anticipate what's coming—or even recognize when things aren't going well. And you'll be fried on top of it all.

Margin is not something that just happens. You have to fight for it. Everyone, it seems, wants a piece of you. And no one seems to appreciate the fact that you are a finite resource. Perhaps you don't even realize it. But you are, and if you don't keep yourself in reserve there won't be enough to help you when you need rest, new ideas, or extra energy. You'll be spent.

### **3 Big Questions**

Answer these three questions:

1. What is your lack of focus and loss of productivity costing your business?
2. What could you be doing with your time if you were not buried in administrative detail?
3. What could you create that would truly advance your business if you didn't feel so overwhelmed?

It's time to accept the fact that the way you've been doing things has limited your potential for current and future success. You may think you have it all under control, but the reality is that operating your business and life like this assumes the unexpected illness, unanticipated accident, or unplanned surprise will never happen. They will.

Don't get hung up on the geographical distance. A virtual assistant doesn't need to be sitting in the same room with you to help you with administrative tasks. The truth is that you are already communicating and interacting with people online and through digital services all the time.

Think about it: Most business relationships are virtual, even if you don't think about it in that way. This is true whether you are working for a large organization or out on your own. Unless you are part of a large corporation, you likely have an attorney, marketing agency, and accountant on retainer rather than your payroll. And if you are part of a large corporation, salespeople are on the road, departments are in other buildings, and divisions are in other cities, regions, or even countries. The challenge isn't physical location. It's a change in perspective.

With the right tools and little time to learn your preferences, a virtual assistant will eliminate your need to get consumed in the details that take you away from what you do best.

## Why a Virtual Assistant Beats a Traditional One

If you recognize your need for an assistant after looking at the seven indicators covered in chapter 1, your next decision is an important one: Will you hire someone to be physically present in your office, or will you choose a virtual assistant who can work with you from anywhere with a phone and an internet connection?

If you've ever had a conventional assistant, you might be very skeptical about hiring and managing a virtual employee. If you're operating within an established organization, you might get some questions from your human resources department or even your peers as to why you would go this route.

But the truth is that while some do need conventional help sitting at a desk outside their office, many—maybe most—don't. I've worked with both and find a virtual assistant offers several advantages over a traditional employee. Here are my top five:

### 1. You Lose the Overhead of a Full-Time Salary and Benefits

When you make the decision to hire a full-time, traditional employee, you are not just making a financial commitment to a salary. Hiring conventional help usually involves covering or subsidizing expenses like these:

- payroll taxes
- healthcare
- dental insurance
- vision care
- vacation pay
- sick pay
- bereavement pay
- retirement funds
- disability insurance
- life insurance
- professional development
- travel costs
- holiday pay

And this list isn't exhaustive. A conventional employee costs your business another 30 to 35 percent on top of their base pay. Maybe that works for you. But for others, doing the math means dropping the idea of getting help. Adding the virtual assistant option to the decision can change the equation.

### 2. You Don't Have to Equip Them for Work

For starters, you don't need to find them a place to sit. If you're working within a traditional office, this is no big deal (unless you are out of space). But if you're working from home—as I have done and as countless entrepreneurs do—this is a real concern. Where will you put their desk? Even if you have workspaceset aside within your home, it will get cramped with two people filling that space

instead of just you.

And let's add some expenses to the list above. Once you have a desk for your conventional assistant, you'll need to provide the usual office supplies: a computer, printer, scanner, phone, and so on. The list can seem especially long and discouraging if you're a solopreneur such as an author or a consultant.

Hoping to avoid those expenses, you'll be tempted to cut corners and get by with subpar equipment, insufficient technology, and limited supplies. As far as solutions go, that's right up there with using duct tape to fix a hole in the bottom of your speedboat. There's nothing more debilitating than trying to succeed with bad tools. And it won't inspire confidence in clients who sense the frustrations you'll be feeling.

### **3. You Don't Have to Advertise, Screen, Hire, or Fire**

In *Good to Great* Jim Collins talks a lot about the importance of hiring quality people. He spends dozens of pages explaining his research and rationale for ensuring you get, as he says, the right person on the bus. Why? Because getting the wrong person can be worse than having an open position. Warm bodies are not in short supply, but good employees are.

In order to find the right person, you'll need to advertise the position, screen the résumés, interview the candidates, and make a formal offer to someone. I've done this countless times in my years in business, and if you've done it even once you already know what I'm thinking: it's a colossal time suck and it takes real skill. It's also easy to get wrong.

Some professionals spend their entire career perfecting this art. I've got better things to do, and unless you're particularly good at this, you do too. The hiring process is complicated, confusing, and will exponentially diminish the time you have to do the things you need to do to keep the business moving forward. Why mess with it?

The company who facilitates the placement of the assistant will interview you to understand your needs and match your needs with someone in their pre-screened database. Your chances of a good match go up exponentially compared to doing it all on your own.

What if you get a bad fit? Unlike the conventional employee route—where firing someone can be harder than hiring them in the first place—with a virtual assistant firm, you just ask for someone new. That keeps you focused on what's profitable instead of the HR dramas that aren't.

### **4. You Can Adjust Contracted Hours According to Your Needs**

Most conventional employees work forty hours a week. If you need them longer, you're looking at overtime. But the real question is this: Does every job require the same amount of time? If you've worked in an office, you know plenty of those forty-plus *work* hours are taken up with *not working*.

Contrast that with a virtual assistant. You purchase access to this person in increments that are driven by the time you need to accomplish the tasks you need covered. This can fluctuate up and down based on your workflow. This is especially helpful for consultants, physicians, seasonal businesses, and other types of entrepreneurs whose businesses ebb and flow through the year.

### **5. You Can Avoid Interpersonal Time-Wastes and Landmines**

I'm not suggesting you won't or shouldn't develop a friendly working relationship with a virtual assistant. That's only natural. But when you are working in close proximity, personal things will come up more often than when a phone or computer screen stands between you and your assistant. There's

nothing inherently wrong with personal things in business, but remember: you're hiring help, not a friend or a confidant.

A virtual assistant tracks the hours they work for you. Just like your attorney, they record notes for the work they've done for you as evidence of deliverables should any questions emerge about their productivity or how they are using the hours you have contracted and paid for. That kind of focus keeps the *tasks* front and center instead of pointless water-cooler conversations.

How do you keep track of your virtual assistant without the proximity of conventional employment? The same way you would with any employee—by the results. Ask yourself, “Are things getting done the way I want?” If not, correct it. Don't passively assume that proximity equals effectiveness. It's doesn't. Effectiveness comes from hard and smart work, not yardage. Find the pleasantries some place else and stay focused on getting things done.

One more thing. I wish I didn't have to mention this landmine, but I've seen too many friends and colleagues blow up their reputations, families, and careers to pretend it doesn't happen. No one can afford an affair, and an inappropriate relationship is much less likely to develop with a virtual assistant than with an in-office employee. For some, distance can be a virtue.

## **The Decision**

Depending on your unique needs and the amount of time you require from your assistant, you can make a case for either a conventional or a virtual employee. But there's something else to keep in mind. A typical executive assistant has a limited range of functions they can perform. To find one that can work outside of that range means recruiting far and wide, being willing to pay considerably more money than the average, and possibly hiring more than one person to do it all.

One more advantage of working with a virtual assistant is that you can customize the service with much more flexibility and reach than with a conventional employee. The next chapter covers a wide range of things a virtual assistant can do for you. If you want the best chance for success, don't settle for what's available in your town. Get the right kind of help for your business.

## What a Virtual Assistant Can Do for You

In the introduction I said that delegation is one of the keys to productivity. So what can a virtual assistant do for you?

Let's start by mentioning what they can't or shouldn't do. Anything that is unique to your vision, skills, and experience is yours. You're hiring a virtual assistant to free you up to work more from your strengths. Don't delegate those. Anything that requires a physical presence is also out—sorting mail, filing, running errands, and so on. Sorry, you'll have to make your own coffee.

But there are many, many other things that you could delegate to a virtual assistant, and the fact you haven't done so already is holding you back. Let's consider some of the common tasks.

### Screen Your Email

There is nothing worse than walking out of a meeting, looking down at your phone, and seeing emails numbering two or even three digits awaiting your response. If you travel much, the number can be even higher. Now you're talking hours to process all of those messages—and probably when you have no extra time to do it.

Your virtual assistant can check your email accounts, and if you effectively communicate your expectations, you'll be surprised at how much is processed while you're being productive.

It helps if you already have a system in place. If you don't, I encourage you to get one. In my company, we use [Rhino Support](#), a simple help-desk system that works surprisingly well for tracking email. It allows my virtual assistant to answer on my behalf using email templates. She can assign messages to me or other people on my team. We can even post messages to one another before responding to the person who originally sent the message.

Once you've designed a system and are using it with your virtual assistant, you'll need to review their work from time to time and make adjustments. That might sound like it's getting you back off track, but on the whole this will potentially buy you hours a day. And less time responding to email someone else could respond to means more time responding to the ones those that will move your business forward.

### Manage Your Calendar

One of the biggest mistakes in business is managing your own calendar. I know—how hard could it be, right? Trust me on this one. You will always overestimate the number of meetings and appointments you can handle. You will eat up your week with calls and meetings and more, and suddenly there will be insufficient time left over for productive work.

And what happens if you wake up sick, need to suddenly reschedule your afternoon appointments due to a family emergency, or a meeting runs long? If you're the only one looking at your calendar, you'll also be responsible for making adjustments when necessary. If you've ever tried to book your own appointments, you know just how time-consuming this can be. One forty-five minute meeting can turn into an exchange ten to fifteen emails long. Congratulations. Now you're even further behind.

A virtual assistant will be able to help you keep balance in your schedule and quickly make adjustments when necessary.

## **Confirm Your Appointments**

What's more annoying than driving across town to find that the person you were supposed to meet had the day wrong? *Sorry, I thought it was Tuesday, not Monday. Silly me.* Now you've wasted time that could have been spent on something more productive than sipping coffee by yourself. A virtual assistant can keep your appointments in line and ensure your time is spent on stuff that matters.

Another benefit of having someone confirm your appointments is adding a personal touch to the process. When someone takes the time to confirm an appointment via phone or email, it communicates that the time commitment is important. And it is—if for no other reason than you're parting with 30 minutes or an hour, or even more, of your valuable time. Perception is important in just about every area of life. It can give you the edge you need over your competition.

## **Screen Voice Mail and Make Calls on Your Behalf**

Have you ever found yourself slogging through voice mail messages, fully aware that you don't have time to return even half the calls? It's paralyzing. The good news is that your virtual assistant can gather all the voice messages, review them with you in one phone call, and then follow up with each party with your response. This could give you time to finish the trade journal article you've been waiting to write, get ahead on an important project, or turn the lights off and go spend time with your family.

## **Take Minutes for Your Meetings**

Whenever you participate in a phone or video conference, invite your virtual assistant. They can take notes, flag action items, and send follow-up notes to all participants—along with placing your action items on your to-do or project list. This frees you to focus on the meeting itself and the execution that will make a difference in your business.

## **Book Your Travel and Make Other Reservations**

This can be tedious and overwhelming. If you only travel occasionally, you might not appreciate this as much as if you're regularly on the road. Even if you only travel twice a month, you understand the time it takes to find a good airfare that gets you to your destination and then back home in time for whatever's next—another meeting perhaps, or a date with your spouse or time with the kids. Then there are rental cars, hotels, rewards programs, dinner reservations, and so on.

What happens when you miss a flight, or it gets delayed? On your own, this can be a significant problem to navigate, and nothing makes wasted time worse than wasting more of it. Your virtual assistant can be the one call you need to make to get all the details sorted out while you stay in contact with your family and client, and continue to be productive.

## **File Your Expense Reports**

No one likes expense reports. At least no one I know. I'm not even sure that the people who created expense reports like expense reports. There is nothing like coming back from a week of travel and having to wade through a stack of receipts and notes.

It's necessary. You need it so your accountant can create reimbursement requests and make necessary documentation for tax purposes. But it can take an entire day if you travel a lot or regularly make purchases around town for business.

Are expense reports one of the things that only you can do for your business? I didn't think so. You're better off letting a virtual assistant sort through the details so you can follow up with clients and prospects.

## **Handle Your Invoicing and Other Routine Paperwork**

As your business grows, you'll start to bring in other contractors to support you in your work. You'll also have an increased amount of paperwork coming from a variety of vendors. If you don't watch out, you'll be up to your eyeballs with no way out.

Your virtual assistant can gather all the invoices for you to review and approve, and then make sure whoever handles your accounting is aware they are ready to be paid. Paying people on time—including your suppliers—builds trust and respect. Falling behind, or just being inconsistent, creates a reputation you want to avoid.

In addition, you likely have your own invoices to issue. Unless you send these on a timely basis—and follow up—you won't get paid. And nothing can ruin your day faster than discovering you are in a cash flow crunch simply because you forgot to bill a client.

A virtual assistant can handle all these details, from issuing the original invoice to tracking payments to making collection calls. This can generate even more revenue, because you are now free to focus on finding more clients and generating more business.

## **Provide You Valuable Research**

Research, reporting, and fact checking burn up time. If you're not familiar with where to go or what you're looking for, it'll only burn up more. There is no reason you can't delegate this to someone who understands your expectations. After all, a leader is in the business of making decisions, not necessarily doing the legwork to get there. With the help of a virtual assistant, you can be sure to have all the options in front of you without wasting valuable time.

## **Create Your Content**

Authors, consultants, speakers, and others know how essential content creation is to their business. Other professionals are discovering it, too. In the world of blogs, podcasts, and social media, content is the new marketing. Nearly every business can benefit from a content-creation strategy.

Your virtual assistant can help you save vast amounts of time here. Not only can they transcribe speeches, interviews, podcasts, or other audio or video content, they can also create first drafts of reports or manuscripts, and edit and proof them when complete. More than that, if you're a speaker or presenter, they can help design and edit Keynote or PowerPoint presentations.

## **Shop Online for You**

You can buy everything from rabbits to routers online. There's no reason your virtual assistant can't order office supplies, computers, printers, gifts, or samples, or even submit online work orders for printing and binding for your next presentation. If they have your account information, they have all they need to process your order (more on how to protect your sensitive information later).

Even if you only utilize Amazon, this can get tedious. But you probably have specific requests from a variety of stores and vendors. A virtual assistant can learn your habits and take care of these orders on your behalf with little to no interaction from you.

## **Buy and Send Gifts and Write Your Thank-You Notes**

If you want to stand out from the competition, send gifts and handwritten thank-you notes. If you *really* want to stand out, don't wait for the expected moments, such as closing a deal or reaching a milestone. Surprises make an impression like nothing else.

People want to feel appreciated. Your virtual assistant can help you choose the right gift for the budget you have to spend, and track the package to make sure it arrives on time. Add that extra personal touch and you'll move to the front of the pack.

## **Provide Operations Support**

This may seem out of the purview of a virtual assistant, but I assure you they can be of immense value in operations.

Entering new database records, tagging records, or organizing lists can be worse than a time suck. For some of us it's practically soul killing. Thankfully, your virtual assistant can help with CRM or database management. They can also help with online file management and data collection—whether it's organizing files, collecting responses, or managing surveys.

Your virtual assistant can also run and coordinate projects, everything from simple task management to complex jobs involving multiple vendors and clients.

## **You Win with the Trade-off**

You can see how a virtual assistant is not very different from a conventional one. Sure, there are things a virtual assistant can't do. They likely won't be able to make bank deposits for you, collect the mail, or pick up your dry cleaning. But the trade-off is that you get access to an accomplished professional who is focused on tasks that specifically fit your unique business, while supporting you at a fraction of the cost of a traditional employee.

I've only listed a handful of things above, hardly enough to exhaust what a virtual assistant can do for you. The great thing is that a virtual assistant's focus is tailored to *your* specific needs. And as your business grows and needs change, they can grow and adapt with you. You might even end up hiring more than one to help you in specific areas (I currently use several).

That still leaves several questions unanswered. The next chapter answers the seven I most commonly hear.

## Answering the Most Common Questions

Most people considering a virtual assistant have a flood of questions. I would encourage you to record all your specific concerns as they come to you. You'll want to review these with whatever service you choose to consider.

I get all kinds of questions about working with my virtual assistant, but these seven are the ones I get most often.

### 1. Does It Matter If I Choose a Domestic or International Virtual Assistant?

It really comes down to expectations. If you want your virtual assistant to do things that don't have any language, religious, or cultural nuances, then an international assistant might be a good fit. There are certainly many options to choose from when your criteria are completing basic tasks.

But if your virtual assistant is going to have extensive contact with your clients, vendors, and team, you may run into challenges with language, customs, and communication cues. And don't forget: a time difference could further complicate the international choice.

I have used both and prefer domestic assistants. And from everything I can tell, those who benefit the most from their virtual assistant recognize the value of having someone domestically based who can serve as a partner rather than someone who simply checks boxes. Yes, you will pay more, but speaking for myself, the difference in service is worth the added investment.

### 2. What Are the Broad Categories of Options Available?

There are really three ways virtual assistants are assigned, based on the company you choose to work with.

One is in a random call center group. You may or may not work with the same assistant each time. This applies a manufacturing model to the option with very little downtime. The advantage of this is that you don't have to worry about someone not being available. The downside is you will have a variety of personalities to manage rather than just one.

Another popular model is to assign one virtual assistant per group of clients. Think of this like a co-op. You're not connected to just one individual, but you do have access to someone you know by name. The response time isn't quite as fast or as personal as a dedicated virtual assistant. This is more of an account-manager model.

The most effective model is one where you are able to build a solid working relationship between you and a virtual assistant who is uniquely matched to your personality and expectations. You may not be the only client of this particular virtual assistant, but the total number of clients per virtual assistant is limited to allow for a highly interactive and personalized experience.

### 3. What Kind of Traits Should I Look for in a Virtual Assistant?

Virtual assistant services like [eaHELP](#) screen their people for traits and skills that increase the chance of success. As far as I'm concerned, here's what matters most:

*Responsiveness.* Being attentive and taking initiative isn't something you can teach an adult. You either practice it or you don't. You should look for a virtual assistant who can take the ball and run, someone with a get-it-done attitude. If your virtual assistant deals directly with your clients, you'll

want them to care for your clients just like you would.

*Attitude.* You want someone who is proactive, forward-thinking, eager, upbeat, and positive. It's important that they have a willingness to learn. You want them to be servant minded while balancing the need to get results.

*Prior experience.* It makes all the difference if your virtual assistant has worked in your field before. Anyone can *say* they're capable. You're more concerned with what they've actually *done*.

*Professionalism.* Because your virtual assistant will be representing you and your brand, you want them to be professional and act appropriately in all situations. You want them to be well-spoken and capable of writing well. Remember, every interaction with a client or customer creates a brand impression. Further, you want them to pay attention to the details. It's also important that they are organized themselves. If your virtual assistant isn't organized, you're hosed.

*Technology savvy.* You can't use a virtual assistant who's scared of technology. You wouldn't draft a pitcher afraid of baseballs, would you? It's a core part of the game. You want someone who is not afraid to jump in and figure it out.

#### **4. What Type of Contractual Commitment Should I Expect?**

The best virtual assistant services don't assign you someone at random. They find out what you need and then, through a rigorous selection process, find a good fit. In essence, they are professional "matchmakers." It requires a commitment by both parties to work. Fortunately, the company usually will have already made a significant investment of time and money to find and train the virtual assistants in their pool.

You should look for a company that you can trust, and then you will likely need to sign a renewable contract for a defined period of time, usually twelve months. Pay attention to the termination clause. Look for the process and costs related to moving the number of contracted hours up and down based on your needs. If you ever desire to hire your virtual assistant directly, they'll likely have some fee baked into the contract just like any placement agency would.

Some people balk at the idea of signing a contract. But without a commitment, you are saying, "You work for me, and, if I like you, I will keep you." Try that with a traditional employee and see how far you get. It doesn't work in either context.

#### **5. How Do Virtual Assistants Charge?**

This varies based on the service you choose to go through. Just like the different models described above, each one has a different set of fees. Usually, you'll see either an hourly or monthly fee based on a set amount of predetermined work.

The hourly fees can be as little as \$10 to \$20 an hour or as high as \$30 to \$40 an hour based on the service provider, the type of work, and the amount of time you purchase. You'll usually get an hourly rate reduction at certain increments (for instance, every five hours you add to your base reduces the hourly rate by a certain amount).

Trust me on this: don't hire a virtual assistant based on the cheapest option available. Like most things in life, you get what you pay for. The real issue is not what you pay, but the additional margin the *right* virtual assistant creates for you. If you find yourself having to correct errors, explain the same procedures over and over, or do damage control with offended clients, you have added to your workload—not decreased it.

You won't pay your virtual assistant directly. That will occur through a corporate accounting

process like it would with any other vendor or supplier. This helps mitigate any uncomfortable situations with a virtual assistant that isn't working out. The service provider will be responsible for addressing any personal or professional misgivings. Consider it a drama-reduction service.

## **6. Can I Really Share Sensitive Information with My Virtual Assistant?**

This was my biggest hang-up. It is important, for sure. You need to address this with any firm you are considering. You need to be assured they have:

- A great reputation and come highly recommended
- A well-defined process for screening new virtual assistants
- Appropriate policies in place for protecting your data

Most software allows you to control access through levels of access you can assign individual profiles. At first, you want your virtual assistant to have all the tools and information they need to be able to help you. If they have to come to you for every little detail, you'll quickly be irritated and experience no time savings at all.

The best way to handle this is to progressively give your virtual assistant more access and information as you grow to trust them. It's the same with any relationship. Give them a little. If they do well, give them more. My virtual assistant has access to my most sensitive data: credit card info, website logins, email accounts, and so on, but I use a software application that enables her to use it without actually seeing it. Best of all, I can revoke her access if necessary with a couple of clicks. I'll discuss this in chapter 6.

Make sure you are specific about the boundaries. This is very important. Your virtual assistant needs to understand your expectations. The clearer you can be when you communicate, the more likely they will handle your information in the way you would want.

## **7. What If My Virtual Assistant Doesn't Work Out?**

Just like a conventional employee, a virtual assistant could be a dud. Even with the best of intentions, not every situation works. When it's not working, you need to ask yourself:

1. Have I clearly communicated what needs to be done?
2. Does my virtual assistant understand how to get it done?
3. Have I assigned reasonable tasks with reasonable deadlines?

If you can answer those questions affirmatively and your virtual assistant still isn't meeting your expectations, then it's time to let someone like a relationship manager at the virtual assistant service know about the problem. It could be a training issue or it could be a bad fit.

Remember, when there is a gap between expectations and execution, fill it with trust. Always assume the best. It is very rare to find a virtual assistant who has been thoroughly vetted and does not care about doing a good job.

Hiring a virtual assistant is much less scary than a conventional assistant. You have the benefit of a service that has already done the recruiting, training, and placing for you. That service should be set up and designed to resolve any and all issues that can't be addressed directly with your virtual assistant. And that same service has the ability to place a new virtual assistant with you if necessary.

The only question now is whether you're ready to delegate the things that are slowing you down.

## The First 90 Days with Your Virtual Assistant

What you do in the first 90 days will set the tone of the relationship for the balance of your time together. It's important to go into this with eyes wide open so you make the most of your time and financial commitment.

Whether this is your first time having an assistant or you are a seasoned leader with decades of history interacting with a conventional assistant, there will be a learning curve. Learning someone's preferences, strengths, weaknesses, style, and so on, takes time. You can't bypass or skip that. Here's what I recommend if you're ready to begin working with a virtual assistant.

### Set Yourself Up for Success

Hiring a virtual assistant is not a plug-and-play solution. You're going to have to allow time for the relationship and the workflow to develop. The most important thing to remember is to keep the end goal in mind—you need to free yourself to do the things only you can do.

Also, do the work you need to on the front end to clarify expectations. If you haven't clearly thought through your expectations, you're going to regret it down the road. If you're not sure where to begin, take thirty minutes and write down all the tasks you do in a given day. Determine which ones *you* need to do. Add the rest to a running list of tasks for your virtual assistant.

You'll get more from your virtual assistant if they know what you want. Do this up front and you'll gain momentum fast.

Don't confuse this with the interpersonal landmines I spoke about in chapter 3. It's important to invest in your working relationship up front. Pay close attention to personality and communication style, the strengths and weaknesses they mention, and how those play out in the first few months. You might even ask that they take a personality inventory like the [DISC](#) or [StrengthsFinder 2.0](#).

### Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!

When it comes to virtual assistants, there's no such thing as over-communication. It's easy to say, but it's also easily overlooked for the sake of time and urgency. Listen: If your spouse can't read your mind after however many years of marriage, what makes you think your virtual assistant can?

Make sure you take time to explain why a task is important, how it fits in the big picture, and what you've learned about performing it along the way. Sometimes your virtual assistant may even be able to determine a better way than the one you suggest. If nothing else, they will have the information they need to help you.

If you don't communicate, your relationship will fail. And, truthfully, a failure to communicate context and expectations falls on the shoulders of the leader. I detail several tools for communication in the next chapter, but whether it's phone, email, Skype, instant messaging, whatever, do it often. The better the communication the better the relationship.

### Differentiate Between “Mission Critical” and “Nice to Have”

If you're feeling stretched, stressed, and overwhelmed, don't miss this. You'll be tempted to push too much on your virtual assistant just for the feeling of relief. Don't. It's an illusion and you'll burn up the person who can finally help you see daylight again. Instead, as you begin, get ruthlessly serious

about priorities and opportunity costs. If you ask your virtual assistant to do one thing, something else might have to give.

But let's say you start off more sensibly. Here's a warning. You can still fall into the same trap. As your business grows—as well as your confidence in your virtual assistant—you will naturally add more and more tasks. It's very easy to create an impossible scenario with your virtual assistant.

There's nothing wrong with a long list of things you'd like to accomplish. I've got a list as long as my driveway. But the to-dos need to be prioritized to make the most of your time with your virtual assistant.

## **Learn to Delegate and Track Assignments**

If you invest the time upfront to train a virtual assistant on a set of tasks, you will reap the gift of time in the long run. But this is hard for some. *It'll be faster if I just do it myself*, they say while sabotaging the whole operation. And yes, it will be faster—that once. But in the long run never doing it again is much faster. If you need proof, just pull out a stopwatch and note the difference.

A related trap comes when you take something off your virtual assistant's plate because you get the rush of accomplishment when you do it yourself. Checking a box is deceptive. What if you spent that time working on something only you can do? You may be dealing with long-range products that take an eternity to finish. Stick with it and skip the distractions. You'll miss the easy rush but get better long-term results.

The point here is that we need to get serious about letting go of tasks that don't really move us forward. You probably got where you are today because of your commitment, grit, and get-it-done attitude. That's enough gas to get most of us down the road toward our goals. But it's never enough. If you want to make it all the way, you need to develop the skill of delegation.

Empower your virtual assistant to help you. They can't will that to happen; you have to be willing to let go of some tasks. They may not be as fast as you are at a given task. And they may find a way to accomplish that task in a manner you have never considered. That means they may have to get it wrong a few times before they get it right. Big deal. Once they hit their stride, you'll be moving faster by far than you are right now.

Make sure you provide ample—

- *time* to complete the assigned task, particularly for large jobs
- *detail* about what needs to be completed and how
- *rationale* for why the task is important

This last point speaks to vision. Informing your virtual assistant about the *why* not only communicates respect, but it also helps fully enlist them in a task's completion, instead of leaving them to see it as merely one more thing to scratch off a list.

Once you assign a task, you'll need a way to track progress. This can be accomplished in a simple spreadsheet, or it may look more like a shared task list in any web-based software application like Basecamp, which I detail along with several other apps and software solutions I use in the next chapter.

## **Schedule a Series of Periodic Reviews**

Understanding where you started, what happened, what the results were, and how you can replicate the good things is key to improving the working relationship between you and your virtual assistant.

Just like a conventional employee, periodic reviews should be established between you and your virtual assistant. And make it a two-way street. Give feedback to them, and let them do the same. It'll help you learn how to lead better and maximize their skills and talents.

“If you want to go fast,” according to an African proverb, “go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” What you do, the decisions you make, the relationship you build with your virtual assistant—these will multiply your effectiveness and expand your capacity for influence, leadership, and success. The best thing you can do is make the most of those first few months by choosing to do the things that will help you go farther than you first thought possible.

## Tools for Staying in Sync

In order to maximize your productivity with a virtual assistant, you should become familiar with a basic toolkit to help your collaboration.

If you're like me, you already have preferences for various apps and processes. It's possible that you'll have very few changes to make since you're working with so many people virtually already. But there will be times when a new app or program will make all the difference.

The service I employ, [eaHELP](#), tracks the tools their clients use with their virtual assistants. There were over 150 different tools at last count. That's a lot, but it shows that working in a virtual environment includes a wide variety of options to help you and your assistant work together effectively and efficiently.

### Ten Tools I Personally Use

My list is fewer than 150. It's not meant to be exhaustive—just helpful, and these are ones I personally use. I've mentioned a few of these in the previous chapters, but here are ten tools working for me and my virtual team right now:

1. *Basecamp*. This is a web-based, project management tool. It is super simple to use. It enables me and my team to store all the files, tasks, due dates, and discussions with the appropriate project. We use it for everything from ongoing, open-ended projects (e.g., accounting) to one-time, fixed-date projects (e.g., speaking engagements, new books, and video shoots). I have found that most virtual assistants and remote workers are familiar with it and use it with their other clients.

2. *Dropbox*. We use this popular tool to share files with one another. It just keeps getting better and better. Once you sync a file from your computer to Dropbox, you can then share a link to that file with your coworkers or invite them to a shared folder. It's simple and easy to use. In fact, I have all my documents synced with Dropbox, so I can share any file at any time without having to move it to a special folder. It also serves as a great backup system should I need it.

3. *Google Calendar*. This is a web-based application that makes it easy to share my calendar with my teammates on a need-to-know basis. I break my calendar into various sub-calendars (e.g., speaking engagements, project deadlines, appointments, media interviews, etc.) and then share the relevant categories with the appropriate coworker. This insures that everyone is aware of my commitments and I don't end up double-booked.

4. *GroupMe*. This is a web-based application and is also a terrific iPhone app. It is designed specifically for group chat. We use this for talking among ourselves when we do live teleseminars and live events. It ensures that everyone is able to communicate with everyone else in real time. It is less cumbersome than using simple text messaging, particularly with larger groups, and you can also send direct messages to individuals within the group, but we tend to use Messages for that.

5. *Messages*. We use this for normal, one-on-one text communication and small, *ad hoc* groups. (If it involves a more permanent group or one larger than three people, we use GroupMe.) We used Messages initially on our iPhones and iPads. However, when we discovered the Mac desktop app, we started using it even more. (It replaced iChat.) I prefer discussions within Basecamp or regular email, but for quick questions and short exchanges of information, text-messaging is fast and efficient.

6. *LastPass*. This is a password management program that allows me to share my passwords and

login credentials with coworkers without compromising my security. I can communicate this information in one of two ways: If I *give* them a password, they can see it and use it. If I *share* it, they can't see it (it remains masked), but they can use it. If you have qualms about sharing sensitive financial data—and you should—this is the program for you. Best of all, if a team member leaves, I can revoke his or her access with a couple of clicks.

7. *Rhino Support*. I have a private email account that my family and teammates use. Everything else comes to my *public* email account, which gets hundreds of messages a day. To manage it, we use Rhino Support. Though it is technically a help-desk application, it works perfectly for this use. My assistants can assign messages to specific members of my team, attach notes to individual messages or senders, ask how we want to handle the message, and use email templates to respond to frequently asked questions. Best of all, it's completely invisible to those we communicate with. The messages they receive look like traditional email.

8. *Skype*. While nothing beats a face-to-face meeting, Skype comes close. The best part is you avoid the hassle of travel. We use this application for individual and small group meetings. For example, we have a weekly management meeting with my managers, Brian and Joy, and my assistant, Trivinia. With Skype, it's almost like being in the same room together. We can see one another, share screens, and exchange text links or other relevant information. We can even record the session if necessary.

9. *SnagIt*. I use this application for sharing screenshots and brief screencasts with my team. I can quickly and easily share what I *see* rather than trying to describe it via email. It has numerous annotation tools, so I can highlight details and focus attention on specific items. I can also upload a screencast with a click. It automatically copies a link to the screencast onto the clipboard. I can then paste it into email and send it to my team.

10. *SweetProcess*. This is a web-based tool for documenting recurring procedures. It lets me provide step-by-step instructions for my teammates, so they can replicate the process and accomplish specific tasks. I can even embed screenshots and screencasts. Given the appropriate access, they can also add procedures or improve ones I created. This becomes a kind of knowledge base that grows in value over time. It also makes it very easy to train new virtual assistants or coworkers.

It has never been easier to collaborate in a virtual environment than it is right now. Whatever you need to get done, there is a tool to help you figure it out. The important thing is to keep the focus on productivity and let the details come together as you work with your virtual assistant.

# Conclusion

## Adopt a Proven Model

The way we work today is very different from the way we worked just five or ten years ago. Until now, it seemed as if the only option any entrepreneur, small business, or corporation had was to hire conventional help. Not anymore.

Inside and outside the corporation, people need help to get the work done. But corporations dread bulking up their payrolls, and solopreneurs worry that new overhead will kill their growing enterprise. I get it. I also get that these are outdated fears. Today large corporations, small businesses, and independent workers all have access to the help they need.

Nothing will renew your passion and drive like dumping the weight of needless work. You need to have room to grow your business, but you can't do that if your day is crammed with tasks others can do for you. Unless you quit doing the things keeping you from being productive, you will eventually stagnate, plateau, and stall out.

### Flexible, Professional, and Responsive

Keep these three things in mind:

1. *Your virtual assistant works part-time.* You may not be able to afford a full-time assistant or keep one busy for forty hours a week. As it turns out, you don't need to. Instead, start by committing to just five hours a week. This commitment can adjust as your needs change.

2. *Your virtual assistant is a professional.* They can filter your email, book your travel, manage your calendar, handle invoicing, and respond to all routine requests—all the things we covered in chapter 3. And your virtual assistant will likely be three times as fast as you are when working through administrative details. They will do way more than you can do in way less time.

3. *Your virtual assistant will handle things your way.* Once you spend a little time on the front end explaining how you want your business handled, they will understand your expectations. If they have a question, they will come to you. Technology makes it easy to calibrate and recalibrate when necessary to make sure you are in sync.

### Your Next Step

If you're still curious whether this model can work for you, that's okay. But find your confidence in the experience of a broad and growing base of entrepreneurs and executives who are benefiting greatly from working with a virtual assistant. Some work in high-rises, others on farms. They're all finding time and room to grow their businesses thanks to virtual assistants. I meet and hear from them all the time.

By hiring a virtual assistant you are getting the help you need to advance your core objectives while at the same time minimize your operating expenses. If the key to long-term business success is agility, then the virtual assistant model makes it possible for every leader to acquire the resources they need—now rather than at some random point in the future.

To explore the possibility of hiring your own virtual assistant, I recommend you contact [eaHELP](#) and request a quote. As I suggest above, you can get started with as little as five hours a week. That's how I began, and it was one of the best business decisions I ever made.

# Appendix

## Developing a Virtual Assistant Job Description

*By Bryan Miles*

Let's say that you've decided you need a virtual assistant, and you're ready to make a move. The Delegation Matrix below can help you establish priorities and determine which tasks to keep for yourself and which ones to pass to your virtual assistant.

	YOU	OTHERS
LOVE	1. KEEP	2. DELEGATE (coach/lead)
HATE	3. DELEGATE	4. DELEGATE

'Delegation Matrix' by Bryan Miles

It's practically self-explanatory; think about what you like versus what you don't like. If you don't like it, it's probably a time suck for you and your business.

Look at Quadrants 3 and 4. If you require the help of others to do something and you hate doing it, of course you need to delegate it. But that also goes for things you are capable of doing but still hate. These are the tasks that you procrastinate over, things like bookkeeping, legal work, detail junk, project management, proofreading, and so on. Forget about it. Even though you're capable, you are probably not proficient, and it's not getting done efficiently anyway because you keep putting it off. Life's too short to waste time doing things you hate when someone can do it better for you and do it with joy.

What about things you love? Quadrant 1 is obvious. If there's something only you can do and you love doing it, then you just found your job description.

The trick is Quadrant 2. You may love things that are distracting you from your true sweet spot. All the things that others can do for you, even if you love them, should go on your list of things to delegate to your virtual assistant. You may find that this is an area where you are an excellent coach—but it's not your main thing.

### A Virtual Assistant Job Description

Creating a virtual assistant job description is easy:

1. Itemize what you personally do. All of it—daily, weekly, and monthly. Estimate how long those tasks take and put time values after each of them: 30 minutes; 1 hour; 15 minutes; and so on. It will probably take a few days to get a thorough and accurate list.
2. Following the Delegation Matrix, tag everything on the list as Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4.
3. Isolate the tagged items. You keep Q1 stuff.
4. Be brutally honest about the Q2 stuff. You may have Q1 items that are really Q2. Remember, if you're not hard on yourself now, you're just making your job hard later.
5. Rank the remaining tasks in order of importance. What are the essential tasks for your business? That list now forms the core job description for your new virtual assistant.

Obviously, there are things you should never delegate, such as essentials tied to your culture, your team, and your vision. But any task that keeps you from doing what only you can do is potentially holding you back. A virtual assistant can help get you back on track.

*Thank you for reading*

**We invite you to share your thoughts and reactions**



## About the Author

Michael Hyatt is the author of *Platform: Get Noticed in a Noisy World* (Thomas Nelson, 2012). It is a *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* bestseller. Recently, *Forbes* magazine named him one of the “Top 50 Social Media Influencers in the World.”

He started his career in the world of traditional media. He has served in a variety of roles in the book publishing industry, most recently as the chairman and CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers.

He was an early adopter of new media. His blog, [MichaelHyatt.com](http://MichaelHyatt.com), is one of the most popular in the world, with more than half a million unique visitors per month. His podcast, *[This Is Your Life](#)*, is consistently in the top ten in the Business category on iTunes and downloaded by more than 350,000 people a month. He also has more than 200,000 followers on Twitter.

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