




Hiring The Best VA

Your Quick Guide to Hiring the Best Virtual Assistant for Your Business



Hiring a VA is not just about delegating tasks, it is more about redeeming your joy and passion in your business. So when you decide to outsource you shouldn't do it blindly – get the best virtual assistant out there!

It all starts with looking carefully at your businesses processes. Ultimately you want a hiring a process that is structured well – and this eBook can help you do just that.

Build an efficient and highly effective virtual team and get it right the first time.

Hiring the Best VA

Chapter 1: Understanding Your VA Needs

Understanding your virtual assistant needs is the critical first step in finding the best VA for your business.

Chapter 2: Documenting Your VA Needs

Knowing your VA needs is only the first step in the hiring process. Now you need to put everything in writing.

Chapter 3: Recruiting Your Best VA

Now armed with your job description and specification, the next step is looking for the best VA candidates for your business. They are out there somewhere!

Script 4: Selecting The Best VA for Your Business

You already shortlisted the best candidates in your VA search. But how do you actually choose the best one?

Chapter 1: Understanding Your VA Needs

According to Global Market Insights, Inc., the demand for virtual assistants will see a 34% annual growth in the next 7 years. It would be safe to assume that businesses of the future would see virtual assistants as a necessity to answer its demand for talent. Sooner or later your small business will grow and you will likely be pressed for time year after year. You will be needing all the help you can get.

Can you afford to be left out? Looking at how things are panning out – probably not.

Step 1 in hiring a VA is to assess your pain points as an entrepreneur. You can ask yourself this key question:

“What is stressing me out in my business?”

Write down your answers in a piece of paper. There is a big possibility you will be writing one of these down:

1. I am drowning in emails
2. I am missing a lot of calls when I am out in the office
3. I have missed client meetings or arrive late in many other appointments
4. I am way behind in answering online inquiries
5. My social media presence is weak to say the least – I just do not have time to update my accounts

Now that you have identified the tasks that's robbing you time away from your core business activities, you can finally start ridding yourself of these high-stress, mundane tasks.

Want more context of the time you end up wasting by doing tasks you can easily delegate to others? Have a look at this:

THE TIME YOU WASTE ON DAILY TASKS



Marisa's TIP:

Start recording the tasks that you do every day. Time each one of them using apps like Toggl or Hours. There is a big chance that your pain points are where you are also bleeding your time!

As you begin to clearly identify your pain points and how a VA can possibly help you in that, you also need to consider the needs that is dependent on the nature of your business and industry. You can use this 3-step process:

STEP 1: ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

STEP 2: PROVIDE ACCURATE ANSWERS

STEP 3: DRAW CONCLUSIONS

Ask the right questions

1. How and where do I acquire clients?
2. What are my busiest hours?
3. What are my operational bottlenecks?
4. What are the emerging trends in my line of business?

Provide accurate answers

1. I acquire clients mainly on social media
2. The busiest hours for my business is 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM BNE
3. My operational bottleneck is answering social media inquiries
4. The emerging trends in my line of business is Facebook advertising and publishing instructional video content for my online followers.

Draw conclusions

1. I need a VA who is skilled in social media management
2. I need a VA that can work until 11:00 PM BNE
3. I need a VA with superb AU English communication skills (written and verbal)
4. I need a VA who is experienced with FB ad campaigns and can do high quality video editing

As you start digging deeper into the nature of your business and industry, you also get more hiring details – details that can improve the quality of your VA applicants.

“You can't teach employees to smile. They have to smile before you hire them.”

– **Arte Nathan**, *Wynn Las Vegas*

Chapter 2: Documenting Your VA Needs

Now that you have identified your needs, you have clarified your expectations and requirements, the next best thing to do is to document everything.

Writing things down will consistently guide you in your virtual assistant search process. This document will also allow you to follow a standard as you move towards working with a virtual workforce.

You will probably need to hire a new virtual assistant in the future too so it's good to have a document you can use for future reference.

Where do you start with the documentation?

You begin with Job Descriptions (JD) and Job Specifications (JS).

First, let's clarify the difference between the two.

- Job descriptions list down the tasks, duties and responsibilities of your VA.
- Job specifications, on the other hand, outline the requirements the applicant needs to have to get the job

BAD HIRING DECISIONS

THE COST OF

THE COST OF BAD HIRING DECISIONS

Bad hires can cost the company well over \$100 million.
- Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh

80% of employee turnover is due to bad hiring decisions.
- Harvard business review

Poor hiring decision for a candidate earning \$100,000 per year could cost \$250,000 on average.
- dice.com

The top factor leading to a failed hire is a poor skills match.
- Robert Half International

The second most common reason (30%) for failed hire is unclear performance objectives.
- Robert Half International

Writing A Job Description

Job descriptions are written from your needs as a business owner. You started with the question: "what tasks are stressing me out in my business?" The answers from that question become the items in your JD.

JDs clearly state the tasks you expect your VA to do. It also describes the manner how these duties are executed and when.

This allows interested VA applicants to have a clear idea what is expected of them while giving them a way to measure up their skills to do the job. The clearer you are with your tasks the more qualified people you can attract to work with you.

A sample of a virtual assistant job description:

JOB DESCRIPTION

We are looking for a Virtual Assistant to provide various administrative and marketing tasks, including answering emails and calls, scheduling meetings and managing social media marketing tasks.

For this role, a strong Internet connection is required, along with experience using communication tools like Skype and project management platforms like Trello.

Ultimately, you should be able to deliver high-quality work under minimum supervision.

Responsibilities:

1. Respond to emails
2. Take phone calls
3. Schedule meetings and organize the calendar
4. Manage social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn) for marketing purposes
5. Provide customer service as first point of contact



Marisa's TIP:

Do not forget to write a brief description of your business in the JD. It gives your prospective hire an idea of your industry and what your business is really all about. This ensures a good fit from the very start.

Writing A Job Specification

Job specifications are based from the things you have listed down in your JD.

If you wrote "Manage social media platforms" in the job description, three possible entries in your job specification can include:

1. Must be very familiar with Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and LinkedIn
2. Must have good written communication skills
3. Must be familiar with running paid ads on social media platforms

The more specific you are with your JD, the better your job specification will be. You need to remember that you are looking for a qualified VA. The depth of your JS will have an effect on your recruitment pooling.

This is a sample of a VA job specification:

JOB SPECIFICATION

As a Virtual Assistant tasked to do administrative and social media marketing functions, you are expected to have the following skills and qualifications.

1. Proven experience as a Virtual Assistant or relevant role
2. Proficiency in taking calls
3. Above average oral and written communication skills (English)
4. Familiar with current technologies, like desktop sharing, cloud services and VoIP
5. Knowledgeable in online calendars and scheduling (e.g. Google Calendar)
6. Excellent phone, email and instant messaging communication skills
7. Excellent time management skills
8. Solid organizational skills
9. Knowledge on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn platforms

Documenting your VA needs clarifies your hiring criteria. It also strengthens your standards so that you do not have to settle for less. Remember you are outsourcing to empower your business. Find someone that has the skills and the confidence to do the tasks for you effectively.

"Never hire someone who knows less than you do about what he's hired to do."

– Malcolm Forbes, *Forbes*

Chapter 3: Recruiting Your Best VA

It is time to look for the right people with the skills and competencies you need.

The most common question is: where to look for the best VAs?

The good news is that you did everything right from the very beginning:

1. You made sure you understand your needs as a business owner
2. You based your job description from pain points you have in your day to day life as an entrepreneur
3. You made sure the tasks you want delegated have corresponding skill requirements through a job specification

Because of that, sourcing and pooling qualified applicants becomes easier. You have all the basics covered!

Where do you start your VA search?

- Friends' recommendations and business network referrals
- BPO companies specializing in VA services
- VA platforms in the Internet

The good thing in starting your VA sourcing with your friends and business connections is that you do not have to worry too much about the credibility of the candidates you are shortlisting. Since you are given names that are personally vetted by your connections, you know that you have good people in your pool.

There is also a huge chance that the VA's your friends are giving you are already familiar with your industry or have been working inside it for quite some time. This means you do not have to start from scratch in your training if you do decide to hire them.

The Power of Referrals in Hiring

1. THE OFTEN UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF VA REFERRALS

If you have 200 friends / business contacts in your network and each of them have at least 100 contacts of their own,



+ 100 = THEN YOU HAVE 20,000
CONTACTS EACH

POSSIBLE VA REFERRALS FROM THAT SOURCE ALONE.

2. REFERRALS CONVERTS TO MORE HIRES



JOBVITE RESEARCH

DISCOVERED THAT REFERRALS HAVE THE HIGHEST APPLICANTS-TO-HIRED CONVERSION RATES AMONG OTHER MEANS OF TALENT ACQUISITION

3. REFERRALS ARE HIRED FASTER

Applicants that are referrals from your own network are hired sooner compared to those that are sourced on other means



4. REFERRALS ARE HAPPIER IN THEIR JOBS



Referrals have higher job satisfaction rates so they stay longer in a company compared to their counterparts

The downside of asking around only for referrals is that you are not casting your net as wide as you can. There is a big possibility that you end up with only a handful of applicants and if the skills and technological knowledge do not fit your needs then you end up not having anyone to hire.

If you want to have a bigger pool to choose VA's from, you can Google the top BPO companies and VA platforms out there that specializes in VA services. The following are the top choices on Google today.

1. VANetworking
2. AssistU
3. Zirtual
4. Elance
5. StaffCentrix
6. Upwork



Marisa's TIP:

Not all VA providers are made equal. Choose carefully, take your time in building a pool of talent that you would be happy to consider of hiring.

Recruiting the right VA can be a time-consuming process. You need to be patient and intentional. The good thing about careful pooling is that you also get a good list of candidates. The better VA applicants you have for consideration, the higher the chances of hiring the best one.

"Time spent on hiring is time well spent."

– Robert Half

Chapter 4: Selecting The Best VA for Your Business

Needless to say, this last step is the most important of all. The decision you make here would impact the way you do your business in the coming months! If you choose right, expect your workload to lighten, and redeem more time to focus on the more important things for your business. If you choose wrong, expect to add expense to your payroll while being burdened with an ineffective hire.

I personally have 5 criteria for VA's that I feel every entrepreneur should also consider.

1. Attitude and Professionalism
2. Job Fit
3. Image and brand
4. Skills
5. Availability
6. Experience

Why Attitude and Professionalism First?

"Hire for attitude, train for skill". Attitude can set a VA right from the get-go. While skill ensures that the VA can do the job, his attitude dictates how well he does the job in the midst of pressure and difficult situations. For example, you do not just need an exemplary video editor, you need someone who is willing to learn, who has the humility to listen to your instructions and who has the patience to stay on the project until it is completed.

Mark Murphy, the author of "Hiring for Attitude", found out in one of his studies that 46% of 20,000 new hires fail within a year and a half. The reason? 89% failed because of attitude issues. That makes the point, doesn't it?

You also have to understand that when a virtual assistant answers you with respect and values your time, you know the same VA will treat your clients the same. And you need someone like that in your business, you need that kind of support as you begin to expand.

What About Job Fit?

"You can easily sense if you click with the VA you are interviewing. Is he speaking the same language as you do? Does she share your enthusiasm with your business? Is he friendly enough? Can you sense her eagerness to work with you?"

Even with the right attitude and skill, if the job does not fit like a glove to the personality and preferences of the VA, chances are he will not stay long.

If you want to retain talented people longer, job fit is a concept you need to put emphasis more.

Consider Image and Brand

If a VA company is not careful with the small things, like spelling, article quality or website aesthetics then you can be sure you will have the same issues with your clients as you sign a contract with that VA company.

How a person or a company presents itself online is a reflection of the kind of service they can offer you. Image is also a good way to measure one's experience, the same with branding (cohesiveness of branding elements is the key).



It Takes Skill to Seal the Deal

Remember you need someone you can rely on, someone that can work without your constant supervision. If you want a VA that also writes for your blog, make sure her writing is great. If you are hiring someone to make graphics, make sure she is very good with art and graphics tools and software.

If you have to hire a VA, hire the smartest one in your recruitment pool, select the one with the skills and natural talent to deliver the tasks you want done. This is especially important for your creative team.

Availability

You need to go back to your job description – how many hours do you need your VA every day? What is your weekend workload?

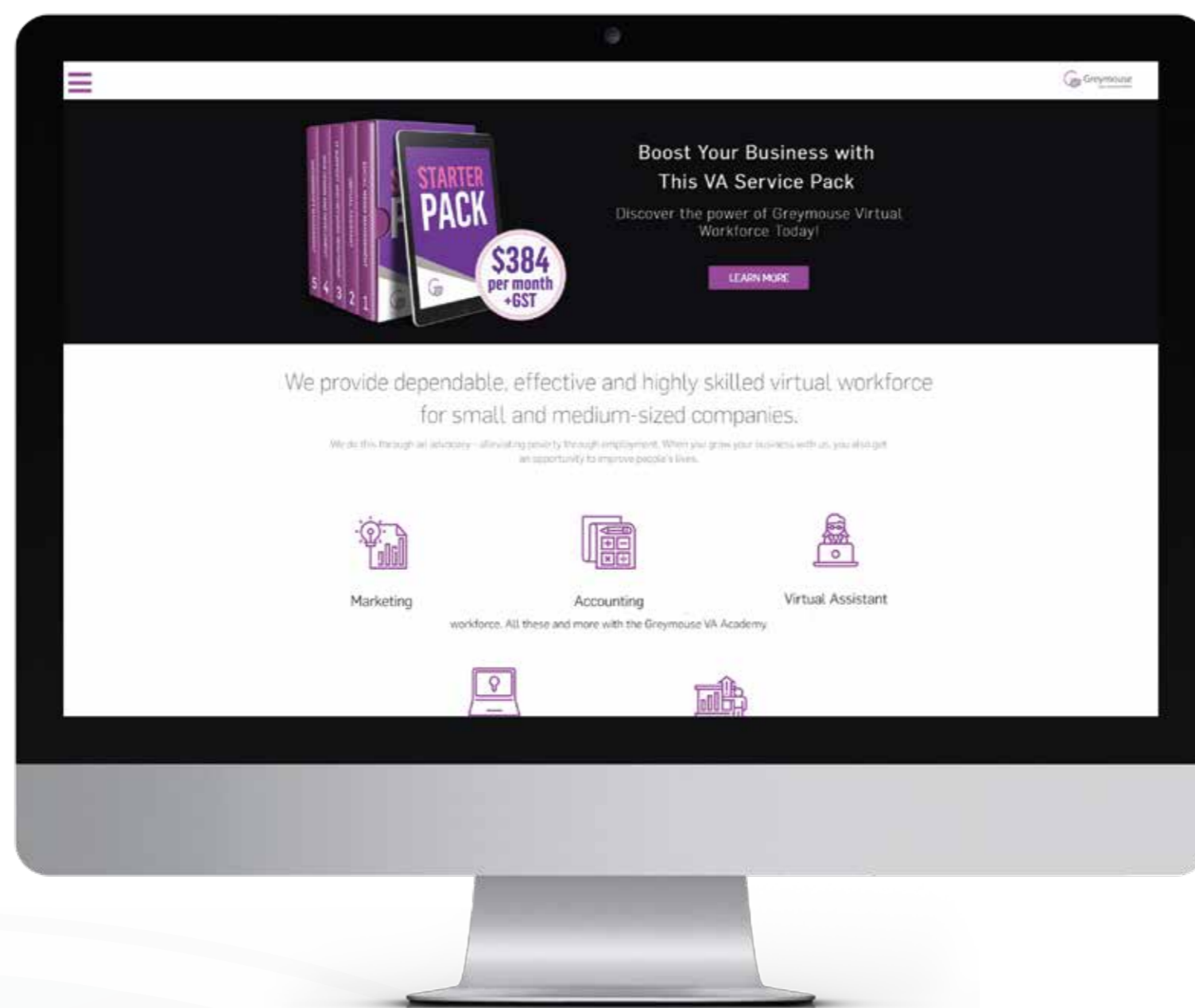
Do you need a VA part time or full time? Do you need a VA to work in your working hours despite the difference of time zones?

These questions can guide you in weighing your VA selection decision.



Marisa's TIP:

You cannot hire someone who cannot meet your time requirements. Choose someone who can be there when you need them.



The Importance of Experience

You have to look into specific task experience, not general VA experience. You do not only need a veteran VA, you need someone to have considerable experience, say for example, on graphics design or social media management. If the core of your needs is around these skills, then a VA with only an experience on calls would not be of much help to your business.

Selection is a big decision, so take your time. Assess your VA candidates with the criteria enumerated here for you. In the end, it is all about being clear with your needs and priorities as the business owner.

“If you think hiring professionals is expensive, try hiring amateurs”

– Anonymous

Hiring the best VA is a journey of understanding your business and your industry while considering your vision for your company. While it is easy to say you want to hire a remote talent for your business, the process warrants patience and know-how.

This eBook hopes to help you get the VA hiring process right the first time. With sound needs assessment, accurate and well documented job description and specification, tried and tested recruitment and selection criteria – you are bound to hire the best VA out there.

You deserve all the help you can get. Your business has been growing consistently and its growth is far from slowing down. Stop stressing yourself and start dumping the mundane and time-consuming tasks to a VA.

Apply the hiring inputs in this quick guide and see the difference a competent VA can do for your business.

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