Kate Erickson of EOFire, an award-winning podcast for entrepreneurs, once revealed the secret of her productivity,

“Hiring virtual team members has allowed us to scale and grow our business in ways that otherwise would not have been possible. Having a virtual team helps us work ON our business instead of IN our business, making their contributions to the growth of our business priceless.”

Jonathan Chan of Foundr Magazine said,

“I believe that virtual assistants are absolutely vital for the modern entrepreneur. As an entrepreneur, the most precious resource you have is your time and your energy. Wasting that resource on something that you can outsource not only slows you down, but it also slows down your business. Having a virtual assistant can help entrepreneurs start leveraging their time better so they can focus on the things that matter.”

It’s not just Kate Erickson and Jonathan Chan who are reaping the rewards from hiring virtual assistants. Many of my friends, Ben, Rebecca, Mary, and others took virtual assistants on board. And all of them have witnessed increased productivity.
How?

You will get to know everything as you proceed with the chapters of our How to Find a Virtual Assistant – A Definitive Guide.

The main objective of writing this guide is to share the right information with my fellow entrepreneurs when it comes to hiring a good virtual assistant.

This ultimate virtual assistant guide has everything from what is a virtual to where to find virtual assistants.

Having been active in the virtual assistant services for almost five years, I have come across almost all types of queries pertinent to virtual assistants. And I have tried to address all those queries in this guide of which I’m sure that It will serve you as a quick reference for any virtual assistant related query.
Every startup owner wants rocking success in their business endeavor

Do they achieve that success?

Here is a reality check: 9 out of 10 startups fail. This is a hard and bleak truth. And the main reasons for failures are lack of right resources, scarcity of funds, no market need etc.

Successful startup heads understand this and hire the right people without increasing the operating cost.

How do they do it?

Most of them hire virtual assistants to be more productive. Now, you must be wondering about ‘what is a virtual assistant’?

This first chapter of our How to find a virtual assistant- A Definitive Guide will provide in-depth information on what is a virtual assistant. After reading this chapter, you will have a clear idea of what a virtual assistant is and what they do.
WHAT IS A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT?

According to PC Magazine,

“An individual who works at home performing administrative functions for clients. Virtual assistants (VAs) communicate with clients via phone, e-mail, instant messaging or some other collaborative software.”

Virtual assistants are not those sitting in an ivory tower – they are real people completing challenging tasks.

Leading companies, such as Buffer, Mozilla, Genuitec, etc., only hire distributed teams.

And you will be surprised to know that telecommuting for work climbs to 37% in the US. This means 37% US workers telecommunicate.

Have you ever telecommuted, that is, worked from your home using a computer to communicate for your job.

Based on employed adults

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GALLUP

The point here is, the trend of working remotely is catching up very fast. “I think that in this day and age Virtual Assistants are invaluable – not only do they increase your productivity on the things you already have to do, they help you to focus on things you couldn’t focus on earlier (the things that are crucial to giving your business the edge over the competition and expanding it!).

My wife and I both work from home, which is a big help, but when she or I are stacking too much on our proverbial plates we do have a few trusted VA’s that we reach out to for help on outsourcable stuff and it makes a world of difference.
The way businesses are starting up these days a lot of them have virtual teams spread across the world, not just in a central office, so having VAs help manage these remote teams is where we are in the modern work place.

The VAs get extra money and are able to work from their own homes for it, and remote agencies are able to increase their productivity and income as a direct result – *It really is a win win for everyone. If you haven’t tried it, or are scared to try it, invest in a good VA and you’ll be surprised by the results*, says Andy Sowards.

**WHAT DOES A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT DO:**

Alina Dizik has explained in her *article on Entrepreneur* – top 10 tasks that you can outsource to your virtual assistant:

- Bookkeeping
- Online Research
- Database entries
- Data presentation
- Managing emails
- Social tasks
- Travel research
- Scheduling
- Chasing business
- Industry knowledge

In addition to these tasks, you can use your virtual assistant for, but not limited to:

- Converting your daily status report notes into the client specific status report format
- Summarization of key emails coming from your clients and subcontractors
- Transcribing your voicemails into emails
- Making traveling arrangement
- Doing follow up with sign-ups required
- Doing research about your competitors
10 Things You Must Start Delegating to Your Virtual Assistant

1. Bookkeeping
2. Online Research
3. Database Entries
4. Data Presentation
5. Managing Emails
6. Social Tasks
7. Travel Research
8. Scheduling
9. Chasing Business
10. Industry Knowledge Preparation

Chapter 1
Click here to know how a virtual assistant can help you.

Here is how a virtual assistant has helped in increasing the traffic to my friend’s recipe website.

“Rebecca is 34, a single mom, who is running a popular recipe website. She is very good at creating a blend of traditional and modern preparations.

In the beginning, everything was under control. But once her site started to attract visitors, it became difficult for her to manage her website.

There were hundreds of comments on the website and social media channels. A big chunk of her time was spent on replying to comments and queries. She hardly had the time to create new recipes and update her website with new content to attract new visitors.

She realized she couldn’t go on like this.

One fine day, she made up her mind to hire a virtual assistant. Now all that she does is to write recipes in simple word format.

Everything, from content updating on the website to replying social channels, is taken care of by her VA.

She has more time for creating new recipes. Her website is being updated on a daily basis. More cooking aficionados are coming on her website.”

The best part of hiring a virtual assistant is,

You can focus on the things that are of high value and you can outsource repetitive and mundane tasks to the VA.
Nope, hiring a virtual assistant is not costly at all.
In my previous blog post: Virtual Assistant Vs In-house Employee: What Successful Entrepreneurs Choose, I have provided a cost comparison.

You can save $3000 initially and $18.75 per hour if you hire a virtual assistant.

What’s more, You don’t have to train a virtual assistant, which might not be the case if you hire a regular employee. A regular employee will need some introduction about the company, the business and the task at hand. You may need to spend $308,000 annually on training for a regular employee. That’s indeed a lot of money!

VIRTUAL ASSISTANT SALARY:

You can hire a virtual assistant for $4.5 per hour*. However, you should make sure that you choose one of the best virtual assistant companies to hire a virtual assistant. Reading virtual assistant reviews can be a great help in making an informed decision. Rebecca, my friend, hired her virtual assistant from India after reading reviews. And she was able to get an awesome VA for $5 per hour.
WHEN IS IT TIME TO HIRE A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT?

It is rare to find an entrepreneur who doesn’t feel overwhelmed juggling with multiple tasks at the same time.

So, when should you hire a virtual assistant?

Brandon Turner explained perfectly in his article on Entrepreneur,

“Before hiring your first assistant, be sure to have a clear idea of what tasks they might be able to take over from you.”

Now comes!

**Which tasks should you delegate to them?**

The answer is simple.

You should delegate tasks that are of low-value, such as making traveling arrangements, managing emails, Internet research, etc.

The right time to hire a virtual assistant is when you are not able to focus on your core business activities due to low-value tasks that you are entangled with.

**CONCLUSION:**

Virtual assistants are a secret weapon for startup heads for success. Virtual assistants not only save money but also boost productivity.

Unlike a regular employee, you will pay your VA on a hourly basis. What’s more, you won’t have to spend any money on training if you take a VA on board. So hiring a VA is a surefire way to success.
In the previous chapter: what is a virtual assistant, I’ve explained what a virtual assistant is what they do.

Here, I’ll talk about the types of virtual assistant services you can hire to boost your productivity and ease your burden out.

The virtual assistant market is growing at an exponential growth. And with this outburst in the market, you can hire a virtual assistant to complete a wide variety of tasks.

One of my friends, Rebecca, hired a virtual assistant for the management of her recipe website. Janny, her virtual assistant, updates Rebecca’s website and replies comments on social channels. Now, Rebecca has more time for creating new recipes.

My other friend, Mary, hired a virtual assistant to do Internet research. Mary is a Chief marketing officer in a big firm. Her role demands a great deal of Internet research.

Before hiring a VA, she used to spend a boatload of time on the Internet research. Many times, she had to stay back in the office to complete her tasks.
Her VA, Shreyam, has made Mary’s life a lot easier. Shreyam completes Internet research while Mary focuses on important tasks. Now, Mary leaves office on time and spend more quality time with her family. Mary is glad about this new arrangement, so is her 6-year-old son, Jim.

These two examples must have given you an idea that hiring a Virtual Assistant is indeed beneficial for you both personally and professionally.

Depending on your requirement and the nature of job that you need help with, Virtual Assistants are of different types. Each VA has different skills and has expertise in respective niches.

Let’s dig in together and find out the different types of VA there are to hire.

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIRTUAL ASSISTANT**

There are mainly 8 TYPES OF VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS.
Social media is a necessary evil. Small business owners spend an average of between 6 to 10 hours a week on social media marketing. You can save your precious time by hiring a virtual social media assistant.

Now you might be wondering – what is a virtual social media assistant? “Virtual social media assistant is nothing but a remote worker who handles social media marketing tasks of a client.”

Here is a list of some important tasks you can assign to your virtual social media assistant:

- Creating Facebook, Twitter LinkedIn etc page for your business.
- Creating social media profiles on different channels.
- Doing research to find fresh content for social media posts.
- Scheduling posts with the help of social media tools.
- Increasing and engaging your audience on different social channels.
- Creating performance metrics and measuring analytics.
- Keeping a watchful eye on your competitors.

Virtual social media assistant from a reputed agency are usually well-versed in managing all the leading social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, etc. So you wouldn’t have to worry about a thing!
I have a friend, Matt, who runs a real estate business. I don’t remember any meeting with him when he doesn’t complain about not having time to spend with his family.

Matt is always a busy person.

He does all tasks himself from posting ads on Craigslist to following up with prospective renters and buyers.

One day, his wife suggested him to hire a real estate assistant.

Though resisted initially, he hired a VA eventually to avoid nagging of his wife.

You would be surprised to know what happened next.

He has more time for his family and goes for a vacation after every three months.

And the best part, His business has witnessed a quick growth.

Matt is not alone in hiring a real estate virtual assistant.
As seen on REALTORMag,

- **Dave Fletcher,** The Fletcher Group, uses a virtual transaction coordinator to handle closings. The best part: The transaction coordinator charges Fletcher only if the deal closes!

- **Chris Coveny,** Royal LePage Performance Realty, found a skilled virtual writer to research and post on his blog for a fraction of what his time is worth.

- **Roman Pavlik,** Pavlik luxury Real Estate, found several VAs to keep his listings up-to-date on his Web site on a daily basis.

- **Sven Andersen,** The Andersen Team, uses a team of VAs to handle every aspect of his listing marketing coordination, which frees him up to bring in as many new listing as he wants without breaking a sweat.

As these and other real estate pros have found, if you truly want to have a business where you can earn more, work less, and enjoy life, focus on what you do best - and virtually outsource the rest.

Top real estate professionals benefit from hiring real estate virtual assistants.

**So, what is a real estate virtual assistant and what does a real estate virtual assistant do?**

“Real estate virtual assistant is a remote worker who can complete a wide variety of real estate tasks, such as preparing & filing paperwork, responding to email inquiries, setting up meetings, etc.”

Here is a list of **important tasks that you can assign to your real estate virtual assistant:**

- Real estate data scraping with the help of classifieds software from different websites, such as Craigslist, Backpage, Oodle, and eBay
- Posting ads on Craigslist, Zumper, Postlets, RentLinx, Zillow and others
- Sending introductory messages to potential renters along with appropriate listings based on what they require
Compiling morning reports with information received from MLS.
Managing your calendar.
Responding to email inquiries.
Setting up your meetings.
Following up with prospective renters and buyers.
Social media campaigns for your real estate website.
Writing blogs and articles for content marketing.
Database management.
Email campaigns.
Doing property research and creating property report.
Following up over phone and email with parties involved in the closing process like a home inspector and home appraiser.
As I mentioned in the beginning, my friend Mary, chief marketing officer in a leading firm, hired a virtual research assistant to delegate research work. This has helped her finish office work on time and she was able to give her family more time.

It is clear from the name, the virtual research assistant is someone who does internet research for their clients.

Here is a list of tasks that you can assign to a virtual research assistant:

- Searching for credible sites for up-to-date information based on your needs.
- Compiling research data.
- Presenting data in an easy-to-understand format.
- Searching for important statistics based on your business.
- Identifying opportunities for your business growth.
- Conducting competitive intelligence.
- Helping you choose a right vendor by comparing prices.
- Searching for guest blogging opportunities.

You can read more here about virtual research assistant.
Are you a busy entrepreneur like my friend, Robin?

Robin is running a startup business. He offers HVAC system repairing to the local residents of Charleston, South Carolina. Robin has an office staff of 4 people. Due to a small number of staff, Robin had to do lots of work himself. Many a time, he stayed late in the office to manage work.

His friend suggested him to hire a virtual administrative assistant. After a little fuss, he hired a virtual assistant to manage administrative tasks that started to save him 2-3 hours daily. Now, he has more time to make plans for the growth of his business, and he reaches his home on time.

A virtual administrative assistant not only made Robin’s life easier, but also helped him grow his business.

Now, you might have a question what is a virtual administrative assistant and how did he help Robin?

The definition of virtual administrative assistant can be given as below,

“A virtual administrative assistant is someone who does a variety of administrative tasks, such as managing contact lists, handling billing and accounting, handling basic HR duties, etc.”
The list of important tasks that you can assign to your virtual administrative assistant are mentioned below:

- Managing emails and telephone calls.
- Scheduling management.
- Bookkeeping and customer management.
- Keeping you informed about your industry.
- Managing a contact list in a spreadsheet.
- Calendar management and setting up meetings.
- Making travel arrangements.
- Document formatting and management.
eCommerce businesses are booming like anything. With the growth of businesses, the workload of eCommerce businessmen has increased as well. Now, they need to be more aggressive in their efforts to outgrow their competition.

eCommerce virtual assistants can ease out the burden of eCommerce businessmen.

Here is a list of important tasks that you can delegate to your eCommerce virtual assistant:

- eCommerce product data entry.
- Handling transaction in a seamless way.
- Managing inventory on a daily basis.
- Writing SEO-friendly product descriptions.
- Conducting your competitors’ analysis.
- Providing 24/7 email and chat supports to your customers.
- Taking care of order processing.
- Editing product images.
- Product category management.
- Coupon data entry.
- Product classification & taxonomy development.
- Handling return and exchange of products.
eCommerce virtual assistants are adept at working with Shopify, Magento, or any other platform. So, you won’t have to worry about anything.

Whether you are selling products on your website or you are selling them on a marketplace, an eCommerce virtual assistant can help you run your business smoothly.

Let us see how an eCommerce virtual assistant has increased the sale of David’s products on the marketplaces.

David is selling his products on Amazon and eBay. Before hiring an eCommerce virtual assistant, he had to do everything himself from inventory management to handling return & exchange of products. David used to be overwhelmed by the workload. Many a time, he was not able to focus on his competitors due to excessive workload.

He hired an ecommerce virtual assistant, Rohit, three months back. Rohit took inventory management, product fulfillment, and product data entry in his hands. This eased David’s workload out. Now, he has more time for the promotion of his products. And he has been able to execute aggressive marketing strategies for his products. This has doubled his sale.
I have asked many entrepreneurs about one of the most cumbersome tasks, and most of them gave the same answer – data entry.

A study suggests that data entry tasks can cause a lot of stress and emotional irritation especially in people who are used to such tasks, making it difficult for people to input data correctly.

*Data entry virtual assistants* work as a savior for entrepreneurs. They can save you both time and money.

Hear a list of **tasks that you can assign to your data entry virtual assistant:**

- Preparing, compiling and sorting data for entry.
- Reviewing data for accuracy.
- Data management (updating data & deleting unnecessary files).
- Keeping a track for activities and tasks.
- Generating reports and entering data into your CRM system.

Hiring a *data entry virtual assistant* is always cheaper than hiring a regular employee to complete data entry tasks, especially when you don’t have to deal with a mountain of data quite often.
Bookkeeping is the backbone of every business – small or big. And needless to say, bookkeeping demands time and resource.

You can delegate variety of tasks to your virtual bookkeeping assistant.

Here is a list of some important tasks:

- Inventory management.
- Taking care of record keeping and bookkeeping procedures.
- Budgeting and year-end bookkeeping.
- Projecting cash flow and account reconciliation.
- Revenue expenditure management.
- QuickBooks and Sage 50 accounts management.
- Payroll processing.
- Bank and credit card reconciliation.
- Excel bookkeeping data entry

You can easily hire virtual assistants adept at widely used software, such as Xero, NetSuite, QuickBooks, etc.

As Mentioned earlier, my friend Robin who runs a business of HVAC system repair has a small staff of 4 people. He has hired a virtual bookkeeping assistant to manage bookkeeping for his business.
As a business owner, you must be aggressive in planning marketing strategies. A virtual marketing assistant can help you streamline your marketing efforts.

What is virtual marketing assistant and what they do?

“A virtual marketing assistant is someone who helps their clients in various kind of marketing tasks, such as Facebook marketing, Twitter marketing, email marketing, etc.”

Here is a list of important tasks that you can assign to your virtual marketing assistant:

- Social media marketing
- Conducting keyword research
- Creating and running AdWord campaigns
- Promoting your blog post
- Developing new and innovative content for all social media platforms
- Researching and identifying new leads in your business domain
- Managing and setting up mail merges using YesWare for Gmail

A virtual marketing assistant will not only keep your marketing efforts on the track, but also save you time and money.
In addition to these virtual assistants, you can also hire a virtual assistant for email & chat support, customer care service as well.

If you simply want to hire a virtual assistant to manage some unproductive tasks, such as making travel arrangement, sending trade invitations to your prospects, etc., go for a personal virtual assistant.

You also have an option to hire a remote team of virtual assistants if you need virtual assistants for multiple tasks. Some agencies offer this facility. Hiring a remote team is dirt cheap as compared to hiring regular employees to complete each individual task.

Now comes a question- **what does a virtual assistant charge?**

The answer is – *it depends. Mostly, virtual assistants charge on a monthly basis. And the rate varies depending on the requirement, experience of the VA etc.*

You can hire a virtual assistant for $5 to $20, depending on the agency you choose and the experience of the VA.

**CONCLUSION:**

There are mainly 8 types of virtual assistants, including social media virtual assistant, real estate virtual assistant, virtual research assistant, virtual administrative assistant, eCommerce virtual assistant, data entry virtual assistant, virtual bookkeeping assistant, and virtual marketing assistant. Apart from these kinds, if you have any task in the mind, you can discuss it with your virtual assistant.
In the previous chapters, I have talked about what virtual assistants are and the types of virtual assistants you can hire, allowing you to understand so far the concept of virtual assistant and their different kinds.

What comes next?

In this chapter, I’ll be discussing the top 5 reasons why you should take a virtual assistant on board.

Ben, one of my friends, is running a small bookkeeping company. Initially, everything was in order. Ben was having a perfect work-life balance. But after some time, things became haywire when he got 7 clients in a few days. Ben started to stay late in the office to complete tasks. He was a bit apprehensive in scaling up. After his wife’s constant nagging, he hired a virtual admin assistant to reduce workload. Now, he reaches home early. He is happy, so is his wife and 6 years old son.”

Virtual assistant changed Ben’s life. Here is how a virtual can make a difference in your business life:
Time, my friend is one of the most valuable things in your life. If you are not counting each minute of working hours, you are making a big mistake that can take its toll on your productivity.

If you analyze your daily routine, you will find that there is a good number of tasks that you can delegate to someone. These tasks include, but not limited to, email management/labeling, booking appointments with clients, calendar management, hotel and flight booking, setting up social media accounts, and more.

Ben delegated the tasks of handling queries to a virtual assistant. This alone saves him an hour on a daily basis
A virtual assistant will not only save you time but also save you money.

Suppose my friend hires a full-time personal assistant. He will have to provide the assistant with office space and necessary equipment.

Even if he decides to buy an old work cube, he will have to spend around $1500-$2000 to build a proper working area. And he will have to spend around $750-$1200 to buy a computer and essential software.

So, he will have to initially spend $2250-$3200 if he hires a regular employee.

What’s more, Ben will have to provide his personal assistant with sick leaves, earned leaves, casual leaves, and retirement benefits.

So, he definitely made a smart decision. When it comes to hiring virtual assistant Vs regular employee, successful entrepreneurs always choose virtual assistants.
Though the idea of scaling up entered my friend’s mind many times, he was a bit apprehensive to execute it. And he was right in his apprehension. One cannot fire an employee if there is less or no work. Being the owner of a startup company, which means keeping a tab on the operating cost, Ben wasn’t in the favor of hiring a full-time personal assistant. To his virtual assistant, he pays hourly. And he adjusts working hours as per his needs.

You must have got an idea that it is easy to scale up with a virtual assistant.

In his guide to scaling your business with virtual assistants, Dave Nevogt explained,

“The truth is that there are millions of people all over the world who are incredibly skilled and willing to work for rates that you can afford. When done right, you can have a team (small or large) of highly-skilled, trained pros cranking on your business while you are sleeping.”

Dave Nevogt has built three (3) multi-million dollar businesses with outsourced teams.
Here are the **top three benefits of scaling up business operations with virtual assistants:**

- If you hire a virtual assistant from a different time-zone, you can be online 24/7.

- You won’t have to train your virtual assistant as virtual assistants are skilled in their niches.

- As virtual assistant assistants are hired on a contractual basis, you can terminate/replace them whenever you want.

All these benefits make virtual assistants a great option to scale up business operations.
If your clients are scattered in the different time zones, you will certainly want to have a customer care department to handle queries round the clock.

And needless to say, if you want to hire employees from your own country, it will cost you a huge amount of money.

Hiring a virtual or remote team from offshoring virtual assistant agency will not only add flexibility to your organization but also save you money.

Virtual assistant cost is very low in India.

You can hire a virtual assistant for $5-$8 per hour, depending on the virtual assistant agency you choose.
Andrew Cohen, the CEO Brainscape, has only eight full-time employees. With this small team, he is able to offer a high-level of customer service, educational content, and software quality.

Do you know want to know his secret?

He hires virtual assistants. In his article on Entrepreneur: Triple Your Business’ Efficiency by Using Virtual Assistants, he said,

“The dozens of tasks that are either repetitive, distracting, unpredictable or better addressed by an expert whom you can’t bring in-house, you may be well-served by getting it off your plate and freeing up your valuable management bandwidth.”

And he uses virtual assistants to delegate repetitive, distracting, unpredictable tasks. He himself explained in the article,

“At Brainscape, we use virtual assistants for customer service, software testing, copywriting, editing, bookkeeping, translating, voice recordings, market research, data entry and the occasional graphic design touch-up task.”

Virtual assistants have increased Andrew Cohen’s efficiency.
What about you?

With the growing demand for virtual assistants, now it has become easier to hire a remote/virtual team to complete a wide range of tasks.

**CONCLUSION:**

Virtual assistants are a secret weapon for startup owners.

By hiring a virtual assistant, you can easily save time and money.

Virtual assistants not only increase your efficiency, but also offer you a safe option to scale up business operations.

And the best part is virtual assistants add flexibility to your business.
In the previous chapter, I talked about the top reasons to use a virtual assistant. Here, in this chapter, I will discuss the benefits of hiring a virtual assistant.

Pete Kennedy, the cofounder of Main Street ROI, was angry at work due to workload. He shared his experience on Huffingtonpost,

“A few years ago, I felt a flash of tightness in my chest from anger as I was sitting down to do work I really didn’t want to do. That was a wake-up call that I needed to delegate more tasks and focus on work that I actually enjoyed doing.”

And he further added,

“The best part is that the assistant I hired was thrilled to be doing this type of work, so it was a huge win-win for both of us.”

Like Pete Kennedy, my friends, Rebecca, Mary, and Matt, they all have made their lives easier by hiring virtual assistants.
Nick Loper, the owner of Virtulasistantassistant.com, rightly pointed out the same thing in his post,

“By offloading your routine, time-consuming tasks, a virtual assistant can literally add hours to your day. Imagine using those hours to meet new clients and explore new business opportunities, catch up with friends, or spend more time with your family.”

You are the owner of your business. So you should run the business and not the other way round. Delegate non-core business tasks to a virtual assistant and find time for your family and friends.

Spencer Rascoff, the CEO of Zillow, always spends time with his family on weekends. He was quoted saying on Forbes,

“Even if I’m on the road on a Friday and have to be back in that same city the following week, I always come home no matter what.”

Hire a virtual assistant, find some free time, and go for a vacation.
“Compared to a regular or full-time employee, a virtual assistant costs less because the business owner does not pay benefits.”

If you compare the cost of hiring a virtual assistant with a regular employee, you will be really shocked. You can hire a virtual assistant from India for $5-$7.

And the best part, you will not have to pay any sick leave, casual leave, or any other retirement benefit to your virtual assistant. You just pay for the time your virtual assistant works for. No work means no money!

In my blog post – Virtual Assistant Vs Employee:

What Successful Entrepreneurs Choose, I have provided a detailed comparison between a virtual assistant and a regular employee.
As an entrepreneur, you are bound to lead your team by your actions. If you want to gain the trust of your team members, challenging and core business tasks rather than wasting your time doing non-core tasks such as making arrangement for travel, sending invites for a meeting, sending newsletters, handling customers’ queries, and more.

Hiring a full-time employee for these tasks is a sheer waste of money when you can easily hire a virtual assistant for these petty non-core jobs.

Dave Nevogt said in his article Top 5 Reasons to Hire a Virtual Assistant,

“A good virtual assistant can be the difference between a productive a non-productive small business. By outsourcing administrative and non-core tasks through a virtual assistant or BPO, small businesses free up its time to maximize business efforts.”

By delegating non-core tasks to a virtual assistant, you can save a amount of time which you can devote to the core business activities, such as making marketing strategies, searching new markets for your products, and more.
Scheduling helps you think about what you want to achieve in a day, week or month, and it keeps you on track to accomplish your goals.”

You should always spend your time on challenging, and delegate non-core tasks to a virtual assistant.

Successful entrepreneurs always hire virtual assistants and spend their time only on growth hacking activities.

Mindtools stated rightly, “Time is the one resource that we can’t buy, but we often waste it or use it ineffectively.
Now, they are skilled professionals and can do a wide range of tasks. Whether you need someone to manage social media or you want somebody to conduct Internet research, you can easily hire a virtual assistant for the same.

Martin, 36 years old, is the owner of a small law firm. Though well-versed in different sections of the criminal law, Martin always finds it difficult to manage social media accounts of his firm. He has got peace ever since he hired a social media virtual assistant to manage the social accounts of his firm.

And the best part, he pays only for the work of 90 hours per month. Hire a virtual assistant and fill skill gap in your organization.
You cannot just fire an employee when there is less/no work. But you can end the contract with your virtual assistant abruptly without any legal problem.

The point here is it is easy to scale up with virtual assistants.

And if you hire a virtual assistant from a different time zone, your business will be 24/7 online. As virtual assistants are skilled professionals, you will spend less/no time on training. They will start working for you the moment you hire them.

So, the next time, there is a need for scale up, hire a virtual assistant.

As explained in the previous chapter, my friend Ben scaled up his business operation by hiring a virtual assistant.
CONCLUSION:

Virtual assistants, if hired intelligently, can help you find more time for your family, reduce operating cost, and strengthen weak areas in your organization. Virtual assistants will also increase your efficiency. And if you need to scale up your business operations, virtual assistants are a safe option. In the nutshell, virtual assistants are your secret weapon.
In my previous chapter, I have discussed top reasons to hire a virtual assistant. I’m certain that, by now, you must have made up your mind to take a virtual assistant on board.

But what tasks would you assign to your virtual assistant? What does a virtual assistant actually do?

If these questions are taking shape in your mind, you are at the right place.

In this chapter, I’ll talk about what virtual assistants do.

I have many friends who have hired virtual assistants for a wide spectrum of tasks. Ben hired a virtual assistant for administrative work, Rebecca for the management of her recipe website, Mary, for Internet research, and Matt, for getting help in his real estate business.

The point here is virtual assistants can complete a wide array of tasks.

You can assign a virtual assistant any task you can think of, which doesn’t require a physical presence.
John Calvin Maxwell, an American author, speaker, and pastor who has written many books on leadership, said once, “If you want to do a few small things right, do them yourself. If you want to do great things and make a big impact, learn to delegate.”

All entrepreneurs must follow this adage, especially when they spend 43% 6+ hours per week in managing their social media channels. And needless to say, this a boatload of time. You can save this it and focus more on your core business activities by hiring a virtual assistant.

Here is a list of tasks that your social media virtual assistant can do for you:

- Creating Facebook, LinkedIn page for your business
- Creating profiles on various social channels, such as Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube, etc.
- Updating the latest information on your social profiles
- Finding relevant content to share on your social channels
- Managing, building the relevant audience on different social channels
- Monitoring engagement on your social network
- Measuring analytics on different social profiles

In addition to these tasks, you can assign any other social media task to your social media virtual assistant based on your needs.
Before hiring a virtual assistant, my friend Mary used to spend a great deal of her time on the Internet research.

Mary’s virtual research assistant, Neera, saves her a significant amount of time by doing following tasks:

- Doing research based on the instructions
- Searching for guest blog opportunities
- Keeping an eye on her competitors
- Searching new business opportunities with the help of World Wide Web
- Searching for best practices in your business domain

If you have any other research-based task in your mind, you can discuss it with your virtual assistant.

If you want your virtual assistant to use any paid search tool, you should be precise and accurate in your communication.

As rightly pointed out by Alina Dizik in her article on Entrepreneur,

“Be sure to send clear instructions, along with usernames and passwords so assistants can get access to specialty search tools or paid websites.”
Kevin Kruse, who writes about leadership development, shared his personal experience on Forbes,

“In interviewing hundreds of highly successful people, including billionaires, famous entrepreneurs, and elite athletes, I’ve reached a conclusion: People who actively look for things to delegate report higher levels of productivity, happiness and energy, and are less likely to feel “overworked and overwhelmed.”

The takeaway here is – delegation improves productivity. What tasks should you assign to your data entry virtual assistant? The answer is it depends. 

A data entry virtual assistant can do a wide variety of tasks for you. Paul Ryan runs a branding agency. He frequently conducts surveys on the behalf of his clients.

His data entry virtual assistant completes following tasks for him:
- Database building and updating (sales, contacts, CRM, etc.)
- Reviewing data for accuracy
- Generating reports and entering data into CRM
- Compiling data collected from online surveys and enter it into CRM

In addition to these tasks, a data entry virtual assistant can also do custom data entry tasks, based on your needs.
eCommerce business is booming like anything, so is the headache of eCommerce business owners.

Product descriptions to category management, there is a long list of tasks that can snatch your peace.

A virtual eCommerce assistant can reduce your burden by doing following tasks:

- Writing SEO-friendly product descriptions
- Product category management
- Editing product images
- Order processing
- Handling exchange and return via phone, chat, emails
- Conducting competitor analysis
- Handling transaction on your website
- Offering customer support
- Commenting on reviews

Apart from these tasks, your virtual assistant can also do any other custom task you have on the mind.
As I have mentioned before, Ben hired a virtual assistant for administrative tasks, so did my other friend, Robin, who runs an HVAC repairing business.

Prior to hiring virtual administrative assistants, Robin and Ben used to be super busy. Virtual administrative assistants made their lives easier. Following are the top tasks that you can delegate to your virtual administrative assistant:

- Email managing/labeling
- Booking appointments with clients
- Following up with clients and customers
- Calendar management
- File management with the help of Dropbox
- Answering support tickets
- Writing and sending invoices to your customers
- Producing graphs from your spreadsheets

Kevin Cruise rightly pointed out in his article, “Even if you can do all the administrative work yourself, why should you? The one hour a day you spend running to the post office, balancing the checkbook, or booking airline tickets would be better spent calling prospects, learning, or thinking strategically.”
One of my friends, Matt, runs a real estate firm. Whenever we met, he used to complain about the shortage of time. Akanksha, his real estate virtual assistant, made his life easier.

Last week, he returned from a European tour. And do you think his business is suffering? The answer is a big resounding ‘No’. In fact, he has more clients now.

Michael Russer, a leading speaker in the real estate industry, said in his article on REALTOR® Magazine,

“Virtual assistants can help you increase your productivity, freeing up your time to focus more on what you love to do.”

So what are the tasks that you would like to assign to your real estate virtual assistant to free up your time? Here is a list:

- Preparing seminar material for your meeting
- Running online ads for your business
- Manage your social media presence
- Setting up your appointments with the sellers/buyers of the houses
- Finding comparable properties within the area
- Custom competitive market analysis
HERE IS A LIST OF THE TOP 7 TASKS YOU CAN ASSIGN TO YOUR VIRTUAL ASSISTANT.

6 REAL ESTATE TASKS

- Reviewing and proofreading documents
- Entering data into MLS
- Updating listing changes
- Managing contact list and researching real estate market trends
- Real estate data scraping with the help of classified software from different websites such as Backpage, Oodle, and Craigslist

What are you waiting for?
Hire a real estate virtual assistant and delegate some non-core tasks to them.
As rightly pointed out in an article on Inc.,

“\textit{The cost of acquiring a new customer is five times that of retaining an existing one.}”

And all great businesses are built on the basis of top-class customer services. Needless to say, it requires a huge resource to establish a customer care department. A virtual assistant can offer email and chat support for your clients.

By hiring \textit{virtual email and chat support assistants} from a different time zone, you can offer \textit{24/7} customer support economically.

In addition to these seven categorical tasks, you can hire a virtual assistant for personal tasks as well. Your personal virtual assistant can make travel arrangement, call a meeting on your behalf, set up appointments with your prospects and more.
CONCLUSION:

Gone are the days when virtual assistants used to be only assistants working at remote locations. Now, they are skilled professionals and complete a wide range of tasks.

Be it social media management, Internet research, or eCommerce data entry, your virtual assistant can reduce your workload significantly.

Hire a virtual assistant and run your business rather than letting your business run you.
So far, we have understood in the previous chapters:

What is a virtual assistant
Types of virtual assistant services
Reasons to use a virtual assistant
Benefits of hiring a virtual assistant
What does a virtual assistant do

In this final chapter of our How to find a virtual assistant - A Definitive Guide, I will be talking about how to find a virtual assistant.

If you are going to hire a virtual assistant for the first time, the whole process of finding an adept virtual assistant can be tedious and time-consuming.

My friend, Ben took a whole week to hire a right virtual assistant. In the beginning, he was not quite sure about the tasks he would assign to his virtual assistant. This delayed the hiring.

But if you employ a systemic approach, the process can be just like a walk in the park. Time to find abodes of virtual assistants!
If you are kind of a DIY person and want to experience the thrill of hiring a virtual assistant, you should search freelance platforms.

There are mainly four websites where you can search for a freelance virtual assistant:

1. **Upwork**

This mammoth platform is a haven for freelancers. With around twelve million registered freelancers and five million registered clients, Upwork witnesses around three million jobs worth a total of $1 billion USD posted annually, making it the biggest freelance marketplace in the world.

You can review profiles and portfolios of freelance virtual assistants and assess how they performed in the past.
2 Guru

Guru is another freelance marketplace. Here you can hire a freelance virtual assistant for $10-$30 per hour. Guru has 1.5 million members worldwide.

3 VA Networking

If you want to know the online place where freelance virtual assistants spend their time, VA Networking is the right place. As the name suggests, it is a social network for virtual assistants.

You can submit a job to the virtual assistant job board. Then, the platform will help you find a virtual assistant for your business.

4 Hubstaff Talent

Hubstaff Talent is a free directory for remote workers. The best part is that it helps in quickly finding and scaling a remote team for you and that too without any fees.

Hubstaff is used by over 8000 agencies, freelancers, website owners and virtual teams all over the world.

You can search based on various categories (skills, location etc.) and contact the team members who are good fit for your work.

In addition to these freelance platforms, you can post a vacancy for a virtual assistant on your social channels as well.

VIRTUAL ASSISTANT AGENCY

Virtual assistant agencies are the companies that have VAs on board and offer them for hiring. A leading virtual assistant agency, such as Acelerar, hires and trains virtual assistants for a wide spectrum of tasks. Whether you want to hire a virtual assistant for social media management or Internet research, a good virtual assistant agency has a VA for you.
Here is a list of the top benefits that you can avail by hiring a virtual assistant from a reputed agency:

- A good virtual assistant agency offers free consultation so as to help you find the right VA based on your needs
- A virtual assistant agency has experienced VAs on board. So you will not have to train your VA. You can start delegating tasks the moment you hire a VA
- When you are working with a virtual assistant agency, you will never have to worry for absenteeism. There is always another VA ready if your VA falls sick
- A virtual assistant agency offers you a safe option to scale up your business operations

Your data is safe with a good virtual assistant agency. Most of the virtual assistant agencies hire VAs only after VAs have signed an NDA

The best part of hiring a VA from a virtual assistant agency is that you can try a VA before you actually hire.

Most virtual assistant agencies offer a free trial of their VAs.

Even some companies, such as Acelerar, offer a 100% money back guarantee on its VAs.
So, now, you are ready to hire a virtual assistant. Following are three things that will make the hiring process easier if you consider them:

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEEDS**

This is the most important aspect of hiring a virtual assistant. You should have a clear idea about what you should delegate. Make a list of tasks that you want to delegate.

As rightly said by Renée Warren in her article on Entrepreneur,

“Say no to stuff that won’t move the needle.”

You should make a list of all non-core business tasks to delegate. If you have your requirements defined, it will be easier for you to hire a virtual assistant.
INTERVIEWING PROSPECTIVE VA

If you are going to hire a VA from a virtual assistant agency, you will not have to go through this process. What you need to do is to tell your needs to a virtual assistant agency, and you will get a skilled VA.

But if you are going to hire a freelance virtual assistant, it is mandatory for you to interview your prospective VAs.

MATCHING THE SKILLS OF VAS WITH JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The VA you are going to hire must have skill sets that the job demands. Most of the leading virtual assistant agencies offer a free trial of their virtual assistants. So you will not face any problem if you decide to hire a virtual assistant from a reputed virtual assistant agency. However, you should assess the skills of prospective virtual assistants if you plan to hire a freelance virtual assistant.

CONCLUSION:

You are going to hire a virtual assistant to reduce your workload. So the hiring processing itself must not be tedious.

If you happen to choose a reputed virtual assistant agency, you will not face any problem. But you must be cautious when you are going to hire a freelance virtual assistant. Having defined requirements makes it easier for you to hire a virtual assistant.
THANK YOU

VIRTUAL ASSISTANT
A DEFINITIVE GUIDE