HOW TO HIRE

A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

A BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE

20four7VA®

VIRTUAL STAFFING SOLUTIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"Acknowledging that you need to hire a VA to scale your business more efficiently and increase productivity is the first step toward reaching your business goals."

. . .

Have you decided to hire a virtual assistant (VA) to speed up the growth of your business while maximizing your staffing budget? Acknowledging that you need to hire a VA to scale your business more efficiently and increase productivity is the first step toward reaching your business goals.

Naturally, knowing how to hire a virtual assistant is the next thing you need to learn as a forward-thinking small business owner.
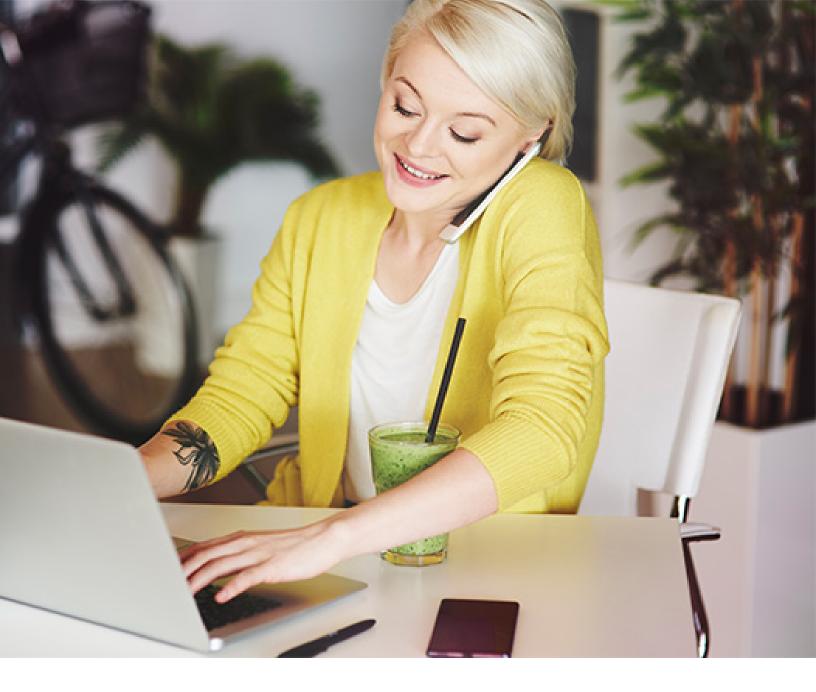
In this eBook, you'll learn where to hire a VA and how much you need to budget for your first hire. You'll also get a step-by-step guide on how to hire a VA from a reliable virtual staffing company. After all, going with a trusted virtual assistant services provider is highly recommended when building your virtual assistant team.

. . .

1 TYPES OF VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

Before anything else, it's important to know the reasons to hire a virtual assistant and the different types of virtual assistants first. Virtual assistants are typically categorized into three main categories: Administrative VAs, eCommerce VAs, and Specialist VAs.

Administrative VA

Administrative VAs, admin VAs or general VAs are usually hired to take on extra work that are important for business but don't necessarily need advanced skills or knowledge. They are typically the first virtual assistants that business owners hire because they take on tasks that are already too much for an entrepreneur to handle or are generally a waste of the business owner or manager's time and skills.
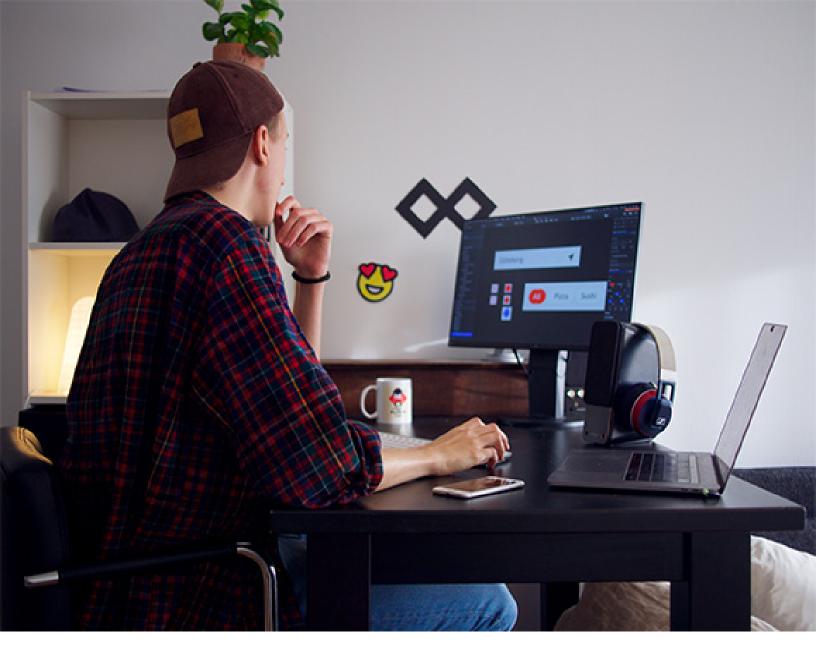
Some of the tasks that admin or general VAs do are calendar management, general correspondence through phone, chat, or email, appointment scheduling, and data entry.

eCommerce VAs

eCommerce VAs are virtual assistants that are knowledgeable about the eCommerce industry. They are either trained to use common eCommerce tools and work using common online marketplaces, or they have the experience to back them up.

Some of the tasks done by eCommerce VAs overlap with those of an admin VA's. The key thing to remember is that eCommerce VAs have specialized knowledge of the online selling industry. This is a big advantage if you're an eCommerce business because they are more familiar with eCommerce terminologies. This means that even if they're doing general VA tasks like data entry, they are better equipped to use the right terms and spell everything correctly.

Specialist VAs

Specialist VAs, the third main type of virtual assistant you can hire, are armed with a highly specific skill set. When you hire a specialist VA, you're hiring them because they can do a task more efficiently than you and with better results.

Specialist VAs can be content writers, graphic designers, web developers, digital marketers, SEO specialists, social media managers, video editors, and so on.

WHERE TO HIRE?

2 WHERE TO HIRE VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

There's an overwhelming number of venues where you can try to source a virtual assistant, but not all of them are created equal. Choosing where to hire a VA will depend on several things such as:

- **Your budget**
- **How much involvement you want to have during the hiring process**
- **Your existing staff**
- **Amount of time you can spend on hiring**

With these considerations in mind, check out which of the following virtual assistant hiring options is best for your company.
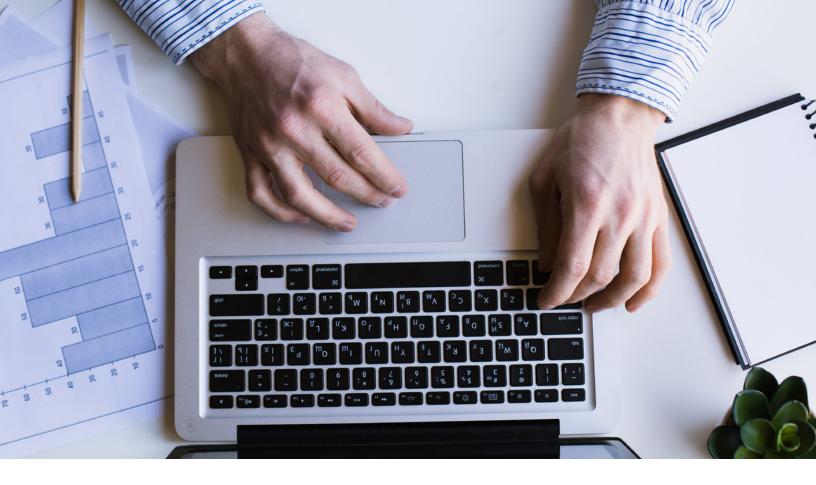
Virtual Assistant Job Boards and Social Media Groups

The cheapest virtual staffing resources, such as online virtual assistant job boards or even social media groups, will obviously require you to spend a lot of time scouring resumes and replying to messages from interested applicants.

At first glance, this might seem to be the most cost-effective option and a great choice for your first virtual assistant hire. But consider this: when you're hiring your first VA, you probably don't know what you're doing yet.

You might end up paying a smaller hourly rate to your VA, but you will spend hours just trying to find the most suitable candidates for your job, not to mention the hours you'll spend interviewing candidates, onboarding, doing payroll, and monitoring them.

Another disadvantage of looking for VAs on job boards and social media groups is that these are highly unregulated. There's little to no protection for you if the VA you hired ends up running away with your money and leaving you with shoddy work or an unfinished job.

DIY Virtual Assistant or Freelancer Websites

The second way to find a VA is through do-it-yourself virtual assistant or freelancer websites such as Upwork or Freeeup. These websites will ask you to sign up for an account so that you can post your job on their platform. VAs and freelancers can then apply to your job from within the platform itself.

DIY virtual assistant websites are a step up from social media groups and job boards because VAs can apply directly to you through your job post. These VAs also have online profiles within the platform which include resumes, portfolios, and even some reviews from their previous clients. In terms of security, freelancer websites are better than job boards and social media.

However, these websites will still require a lot of time and effort on your part. While the online portfolios make it easier for you to screen candidates, everything that happens after will still be on you. Paying your VAs, communicating with them, training them, and monitoring them will still be a burden for you.

If you enjoy micromanaging your staff and spending a lot of time doing administrative work, perhaps you might benefit from hiring a VA from these types of websites. If you want the easiest, most efficient virtual staffing solution though, you might want to go with option number three.

Virtual Assistant Recruitment Companies

Some people shy away from virtual assistant companies because they obviously cost more upfront than if you go the DIY route. However, VA companies offer a lot of perks that outweigh the initial cost.

Consider a full-service virtual assistant provider such as 20four7VA. As part of their service, 20four7VA does the entire VA matching process for free.

This means that you don't have to worry about going through dozens of resumes or contacting each applicant. 20four7VA chooses the best candidates for you and schedules an interview with them for you as well. This way, you'll only need to worry about actually choosing the VA you like to work with most.

. . .

The question "where should I hire a virtual assistant" can also pertain to another thing: countries with the best virtual assistants. Various sources mention different things, but some of the most mentioned countries when it comes to outsourcing are: India, the Philippines and a couple other Southeast Asian countries, China, Mexico, and a few countries in Europe. This is because many workers in these countries have a lower rate but still have good English communication skills.

3 HOW MUCH DOES A VA COST?

The cost of hiring a virtual assistant has an extremely wide range because it depends on a lot of factors such as:

Where you're hiring a VA from

Both country and platform matter when it comes to this factor. Virtual assistants from the US, Canada, UK, and Australia are typically more expensive compared to VAs from India, Southeast Asia, and some countries in Latin America and Europe.

What type of VA you want
Admin VAs are usually cheapest. Specialist VAs usually have higher rates since they offer unique skills.

What level of expertise you're looking for
More experienced and skilled VAs are definitely more expensive than entry-level VAs. This is why it's really important for you to determine whether your tasks require advanced-level skills or if entry-level VAs can do the tasks just as effectively.

In general, however, hiring a virtual assistant is much more affordable than hiring a local employee. Check out this comparison from 20four7VA about the cost of hiring a VA versus a local employee.

MONTHLY COST

	LOCAL EMPLOYEE	20FOUR7VA
SALARY ON MINIMUM WAGE*	$2,640*	$762*
COST OF 1 SEAT IN AN OFFICE	$400+	$0
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS (INSURANCE, ETC)	$400+	$0
UTILITIES, SUPPLIES, AND OTHER OFFICE RESOURCES	$100	$0
TOTAL EMPLOYEE COST	$ 3,300	$ 762

20FOUR7VA.COM

*NEW YORK CITY MINIMUM WAGE BY END OF 2019
**BASED ON THE HOURLY RATE OF AN ENTRY LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE VA

4 HOW TO HIRE A
VIRTUAL ASSISTANT
A BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE

Finding the perfect virtual assistant and building an effective virtual assistant team is very much reliant on finding the right person/s to fill the job. Here are a couple of tips, from pre-hiring to post-hiring, that can help you ensure that you've got the right VAs helping you out.

HIRING PROCESS
20FOUR7VA

PRE - HIRING
(WHAT TO PREPARE)

- List of tasks you need the VA to do
- Tools or software you need the VA to be proficient in
- Your preferred working schedule
- Number of VAs and hours to contract
- Non-negotiable skill requirements or preferences for your potential VA
- Information about your business

DURING HIRING
(INTERVIEW QUESTIONS)

- Why did you become a virtual assistant?
- What are your best and worst skills and work habits?
- Which mode of communication are you most comfortable with?
- What are your interests outside of work?
- Have you had issues with communication in your previous jobs or with past clients? How did you resolve them?
- What do you do if you commit an error, big or small, that affects your client's business?
- How do you deal with emergency failures with your computer, power, or internet connection?
- Do you have a preferred schedule or schedule restrictions?

POST HIRING
(WHAT TO FINALIZE)

- Review your agreement or contract
- Schedule an orientation call with your VA
- Finalize the time tracking, hourly or project rates, payout schedule and other details

WWW.20FOUR7VA.COM

PRE-HIRING

There are a few things you need to prepare before looking at candidates or scheduling interviews with potential virtual assistants. As mentioned earlier, a virtual staffing company can help make the process a lot easier and faster for you, but there are still some things that only you can do.

Here's a list of things that you need to prepare before getting in touch with a virtual assistant company.

✓ **List of tasks you need the VA to do**

List down every single task you can think of that you're planning to assign to your future VA. Don't be tempted to just list down a single task to broaden your choices because this can backfire. You want to hire the perfect fit, so you should make your task list as complete as possible.

✓ **Tools or software you need the VA to be proficient in**

Are you using any specific tools or software for your processes? If you want a VA who already has a certain level of experience with these tools, you have to list them down as well. But don't be closed off to VAs who aren't familiar with your preferred software too.

Some VAs can be easily trained to use new tools, so hiring a VA who learns things quickly can be an option. Some virtual staffing companies, like 20four7VA, can also provide training for your VAs, so that's one less thing for you to worry about.

✓ **Your preferred working schedule**

You will mostly likely be looking into hiring a virtual assistant from another country if you want to save more, so you have to remember to list down your preferred schedule.

If you find a VA who meets all the requirements but can't log in when you need them to, then there's no point. Be open to allowing your VA a flexible schedule as well; many VAs, especially the sought-after ones, see a flexible working schedule as a major attraction.

✓ Number of VAs and hours to contract

By assessing your task requirements and how heavy the workload is, you will also know whether you need one or more VAs and whether it's a full-time or part-time position. This will help you save money in the long run. You don't want to hire too many VAs or contract too many hours and leave

✓ Non-negotiable skill requirements or preferences for your potential VA

Maybe you need your social media VA to have Facebook Ads knowledge. Maybe you need your content writer VA to be able to do keyword research. Maybe you need your web developer to have web design background. VAs, even very similar VAs, have various skills. It's important to note down any skills you absolutely require your VA to have before hiring anyone.

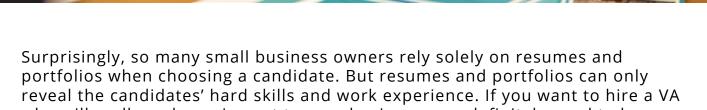## ✓ Information about your business

Just as you want to know more about your potential VAs, your VAs also want to learn more about your business. Some useful information about your business to mention before hiring are: your company timeline and story, the nature of your business and company culture, and how big your team is.

Once you have everything mentioned above ready, you'll be better prepared for your virtual assistant search.

This will definitely guide you if you're doing the hiring yourself. If you're going with a virtual staffing company, you'll speed up the matching process by providing them a complete job description with all the info listed above as well. It will also help your VA provider give you more accurate applicant matches.

Got a couple of applicants shortlisted already? It's time to move on to the next important part of the hiring process — *the interview*.

DURING HIRING

Surprisingly, so many small business owners rely solely on resumes and portfolios when choosing a candidate. But resumes and portfolios can only reveal the candidates' hard skills and work experience. If you want to hire a VA who will really make an impact to your business, you definitely need to learn more about your potential VA's personality and soft skills.

Background research and interviews are the most effective ways to know if the VA's personality and soft skills will fit your company culture and personal expectations. Looking at candidates' public social media profiles are now considered routine for hiring managers. If they've listed down some references, you might want to call them up as well.

After conducting a background check, the next step is interviewing your applicants. If you've never interviewed an applicant before, it can be challenging to think of questions that can truly help you choose the best VA. That's why it helps to have a guide questionnaire ready when you sit down to interview your applicants.

Don't have an inkling about what to ask your applicants during the interview? Here are eight interview questions to ask your potential VA.

Why did you become a virtual assistant?

Their answer will tell you how serious they are about their work. If they think being a VA is a fulfilling and long-term career, they're more likely to commit to their clients.

What are your best and worst skills and work habits?

This helps you know the VA's strengths and weaknesses. Also, letting the VA tell you how they view themselves at work allows you to see if they can provide you with honest assessments about their work.

Which mode of communication are you most comfortable with?

Make sure that your future VA is happy to communicate with you using the mode of communication that you prefer whether it's through video calls, emails, phone calls, instant messaging, etc.

What are your interests outside of work?

Well-rounded VAs are happy and productive VAs. Also, knowing their hobbies and passions gives you more insight about their personalities and if they're going to be a great fit for your company.

Have you had issues with communication in your previous jobs or with past clients? How did you resolve them?

Communication is one of the most common issues with remote work. It's important to find a VA that can overcome these issues.

What do you do if you commit an error, big or small, that affects your client's business?

It's important that the VA knows how to admit mistakes and to ensure that they will carry out the job correctly next time.

How do you deal with emergency failures with your computer, power, or internet connection?

VAs should always have backups and fail-safes in place to deal with this problem. However, they should also know to notify you immediately should this issue happen.

Do you have a preferred schedule or schedule restrictions?

Make sure that your and your future VA's preferred working schedules match, especially if you want to be able to contact them anytime and have them respond ASAP.

The questions above can help you have a better understanding of the applicants. They can definitely help you find the perfect VA match.

One more thing, try to do video interviews instead of audio-only interviews. Video interviews give you important visual cues that will help you gauge the applicant's sincerity and personality while answering your questions.

Lastly, don't feel obliged to choose a VA from the first batch of applicants you get. If you haven't found the perfect one yet, feel free to re-post your job or ask for more candidates from your virtual staffing provider.

POST-HIRING

After choosing the best candidate for your virtual assistant job, it's time to start with the onboarding process.

If you already have a solid onboarding process, then great! You can just go ahead and get your VA started. If not, you need to take note of a couple of things first:

Review your agreement or contract

Inspect everything that's listed in your contract including names, dates, contracted hours, job details, and any other information that's relevant to the situation. If you want, you can have the contract looked over by the lawyer before signing it and having the VA sign it as well. If you're working with a virtual staffing company, they usually take care of all the paperwork needed, so you and your VA will just need to review and sign the contracts.

Review your agreement or contract

Inspect everything that's listed in your contract including names, dates, contracted hours, job details, and any other information that's relevant to the situation. If you want, you can have the contract looked over by the lawyer before signing it and having the VA sign it as well.

Schedule an orientation call with your VA

During your initial orientation call, discuss everything that your VA needs to know in order to do their job well. Tell them all about your business and provide them with the tools, login details, and other information they will need. It's best if you can provide all these information in a secure but easily accessible manner.

Don't be surprised if your VA doesn't have any questions during or right after the call; they're probably just overloaded with information. Once they get going, they're going to need clarification with a few things, so make sure you're prepared with your answers.

Finalize the time tracking, hourly or project rates, payout schedule and other details

How will you track the hours worked by your VA? How and when are you going to pay your VA? Many VAs are paid via PayPal because of convenience, but you have to finalize all the details with your VA as soon as possible. Payment is a very important factor when it comes to building trust and a good working relationship with your VA.

Here's another advantage of working with a virtual assistant provider. Companies like 20four7VA can take care of monitoring your VAs timesheets and handling your payroll. They provide VAs with regular payouts based on the client's approved hours.

Once you've properly onboarded your VA, make sure they undergo through a probationary period where you or a senior member of your team closely monitors your new VA's progress, efficiency, and work ethic. This way, you can terminate their services and find another early on if they prove to be ineffective.

Final Thoughts

Some business owners think that working with VAs isn't a viable option for them because virtual assistants are more difficult to work with. But that's a false impression. Many businesses have found success in building virtual assistant teams not only because they hired the right VA but because they adapted their working and management styles to these VAs.

Just because you don't see your VA or talk to them daily doesn't mean you should just throw a bunch of instructions at them and expect everything to be smooth sailing.

If you hire, onboard, train, and manage your virtual assistant wisely, you will find that virtual assistants are definitely a great addition to any team. You can grow your company purely with a virtual task force or use virtual assistants to supplement your local staff and increase efficiency — the possibilities are endless.

If you need professional help with finding the right virtual assistant, including hiring, onboarding, monitoring, and more, it's best to work with a trusted virtual staffing company like 20four7VA. Click here to schedule a free, no-strings attached consultation call with us today!