



## Understand Your Skills

You don't need to have any qualifications to become a Virtual Assistant - no degree necessary! Now, it is useful to have some prior experience, be that in an office, a call centre, a bank, etc, but when it comes to being a VA even your **day-to-day life skills are experience**. Regularly juggling your busy families schedule - diary management, creating information leaflets for the PTA - creativity (great for social media!), booking your annual camping holiday around the coast - personal virtual assistant. The list goes on and on! As long as you are organised, reliable and willing to learn the possibilities really are endless!

## To Niche or Not To Niche

You will often hear at the start of your VA journey that you need to know your ideal client. A "niche" is something that you already may know how to do, or an industry that you already have experience in. It can be a benefit to identify a niche as you can target a specific audience with your marketing; marketing directly to their wants and needs. The downside to niching is that you may find you limit yourself to who you can work with. I know many VA's who work with all different kinds of industries and absolutely love the variety. **It's down to your personal preference who you choose to work with.**

## Work Out Your Hours and Hourly Rate

Yes, really! You're going to be self-employed which means that **you get to dictate your working hours**. For example; if you need to be making X amount of money a month - you can decide your hourly rate based on how many hours a week you will be working. *Do check out other VA websites and Facebook groups for VA rates.*

The average hourly rate for a Virtual Assistant is £27 per hour (yes really!) with prices generally ranging from £25 to £35 per hour. Often new VAs start their prices low, but once you start working with clients, it's hard to then increase those prices to the going rate. **Don't undersell yourself!**

Another way to work as a VA is to work as an **Associate**. This means that another Lead VA outsources their client to you. The hourly rate is lower, usually around £20 per hour, but it's a fantastic way to start working as a VA, there's less networking to do and it's a great way to learn the ropes from an experienced VA.

You can find Associate work on Facebook pages such as: [Virtual Assistant Savvies](#), [Virtual Assistant Help Desk for "Goto VAs and OBMs"](#), [Virtual Assistant Tribe](#), [The VA Hub](#).

Get in touch with [Mel](#) if this is something you would like to know more about!

## Get The Equipment

The beauty of this business is the very low start up costs. A good computer/laptop is key, along with internet access and **security** ([LastPass](#) and [1ty.me](#) are **FREE** recommended websites that will create and store log-in and password details securely!) but aside from that, anything else you add is more for your comfort. You can literally start with a laptop on your sofa!

## Systems

There are some systems that you will find useful to have knowledge of:

- Microsoft Word/Excel/OneNote
- Outlook (Office 365)
- Canva - to create social media graphics, presentations, posters, documents and other visual content
- Mailchimp - a marketing automation platform and email marketing service (newsletters etc!)
- Google
- YouTube
- Social Media - Facebook, Instagram, Buffer (scheduling posts to multiple social media platforms)

## Name Your Business

Your business is going to need a name - it doesn't have to be anything fancy, it can literally be your name or you can go wild and come up with something really quirky. It's completely up to you what you name your business, but it's a good idea to have something relating to what you do in there, i.e. Jane Smith Virtual Services or The Admin Fairy, etc.

To ensure continuity and to allow your business to have an online presence (a vital part in establishing your brand and legitimacy) you can officially order your website domain and email address here: [GoDaddy](#). You can also build a website for a small fee too!

## Make Sure The Legalities Are In Order – Insurance, ICO Registration & HMRC

Before you start working with clients there are a few things that you must have in place...

You will be handling data which means you need to be **ICO** registered (don't worry - it sounds scarier than it is!) You will need to register for this online and it's usually around £40 for the year. This can now be set up (and a discount applied!) as a Direct Debit via: [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#)

*Tip: When registering you have to describe your business and there are numerous drop down options to choose from - which can seem a bit overwhelming! A suitable option is firstly "Supplier of Services", and then, "Other".*

**Insurance** is also a must, you will be working on behalf of your clients so it's vital that you are protected with Professional Indemnity insurance. [Compare the Market](#) is a great tool for this.

You will need to **register as self employed** with **HMRC**. Once you have your business name you can register online and you will be given a code to use when it comes to do your tax return.

*Tip: It is best to start off as a Sole Trader rather than a Limited Company due to tax reasons.*

## 2 Make Your Social Profiles/Websites

Having an **online presence** is vital when it comes to being a VA. Now, you don't have to have everything in place when you start up, but it's a good idea to have at least one platform where potential clients can find you, you can market yourself and show your followers what you can do.

For example; alongside announcing your new venture on your personal socials, setting up a Business Page on either Facebook or Instagram (or even better - on both and linking them!) and inviting all of your contacts is a great way to self promote (and really easy too!). And don't forget to update your LinkedIn Profile (or create one if you don't have one!).

## 2 Networking/ Finding Clients

Networking is a big part of finding clients; whether it be finding your ideal client or networking with other business owners - you need to make yourself known and let people know who you are.

*As previously mentioned; another tip is to join VA groups/pages on Facebook - they are a wealth of information and somewhere to promote yourself.*