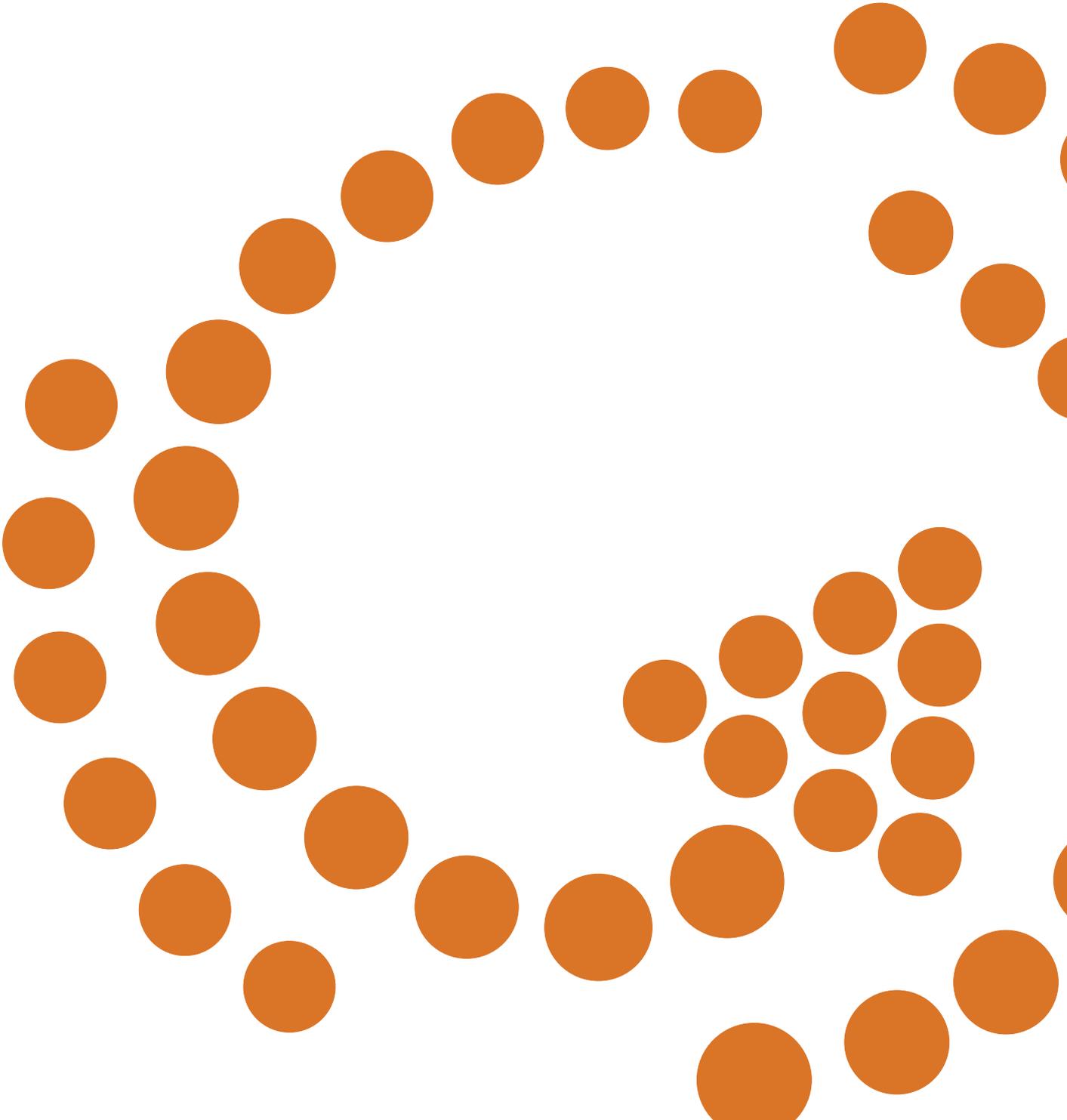


**Outhouse UK**  
How to choose a VA

**OUTHOUSE** UK

Out of this world business support.



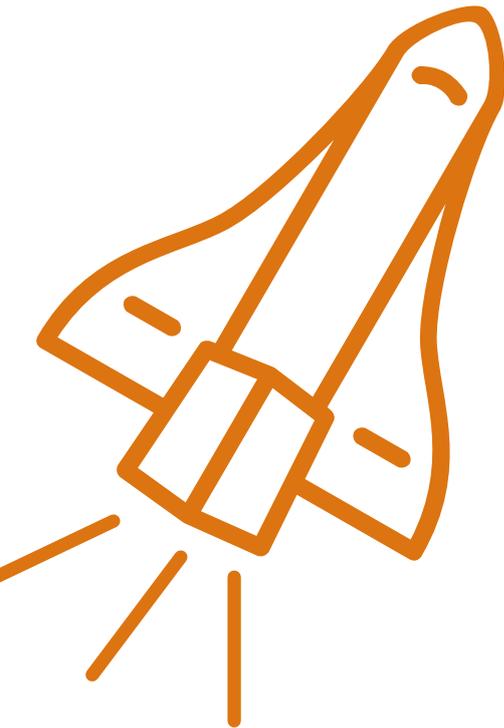
## Virtual Assistants are all about adding value.

Running a business can be all consuming, taking up time, energy, money... everything really.

Whatever your business does, a virtual assistant can add value to your working day as well as the productivity and cost efficiency of your business. Having a good VA on board will enable you to really add value to your time, to run your business more effectively, focus on your clients and pursue growth opportunities – essentially they allow you to shift your focus to working on your business instead of in your business.

A good VA can be your sounding board, always ready to listen. Someone who understands your business and can offer valuable advice, and with the burden of management and administration taken off your shoulders, you can, truly, look forward to regaining a healthy work-life balance.

You will be able to spend time with your family, reawaken your passion for your sport, or travel, or music, art, d-i-y, whatever you just haven't had time for whilst running your business. Not only will your loved ones be happy to see more of you, you'll most likely be fitter, less tired and, paradoxically, much more productive when you are at work.



## That's all fine, but what exactly can a VA do for my business?

A good VA is an admin specialist in their own right, and can also offer you valuable business insights and advice. In addition to the 'basics' such as professional, customer friendly telephone communications and basic admin, specific areas where you can reclaim your valuable time by delegating to your VA include:



**Internet research** – It's never been more important to keep ahead of your competition. Your VA can undertake research, either ad hoc or on an on-going basis. Providing you with up-to-date online sourced material helps to keep you well informed about your competitors. For instance you could have, at your fingertips, your competitors ranked by your preferred industry specific measures. This key information can be used to help you grow your business.



**Lifestyle Management** – Your VA will make you even more popular by reminding you to send birthday cards, organising flowers to be sent, booking event tickets, making travel arrangements and dinner reservations, all sorts of time consuming things that can so easily be forgotten when you're under pressure!



**Personal Assistance** – Your VA's skills extend far beyond the office, for instance organising a schedule for your visiting family or friends, selecting finishing materials for your new extension, helping you to choose your next car or researching holiday destinations.





**Making updates to your website**  
– Your VA will be skilled in web work too, such as product updates, special offers, news and information. Regular updates are an important element in keeping your website at the top of search engine results.

**Updating your blog** – Promote your company by being a leading voice in the blogosphere with a topical, dynamic blog. Your VA can assist at many levels, giving you information about your competitors' blogs, and managing the mechanics of keeping your blog totally up to date.

**Managing your emails** – Email is simply one of the most powerful communication tools. Your VA will save you so much time, managing both your emails and your email campaigns.



**Newsletter updates** – As popular as ever, newsletters provide a valuable source of information to your customers and prospects. Your VA will be an expert in newsletter management, they will ensure timelines never slip, and that your newsletters are perfectly presented. While you're busy working on your business strategy your VA will keep your news content relevant, current and fresh.

**Managing your social media presence** – Keeping your company at the forefront of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn to name a few is in a day's work for your VA.

**Report writing** – Your VA can take the hard work out of crafting that special report, from first draft to proof reading.

**Bid drafting** – Working to your template, or helping you create a template form in the early days your VA can provide invaluable input here.



## How should I choose the right VA for my business?

Like all relationships, your relationship with your VA will be based on mutual respect. A good rapport when you meet, whether over the 'phone or face to face, is an important factor. A sense of energy and enthusiasm is crucial too. If there are small gaps in candidates' technical skills set, for example with specific software that you use, these can be learned. Attitude is either there or it's not, and it's crucial. Working with keen, enthusiastic people is just brilliant, it makes work seem effortless!

**“Use our handy checklist over the page to find the right VA for you!”**



## Use our list below to check some specifics in your candidates:



### Their professional experience

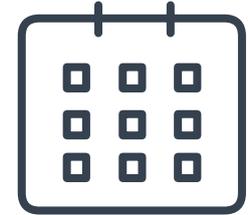
The range of services they are offering, including areas of specialisation.

Their fees, payment schedule and process.



### Workspace

That they have an appropriate working environment, with minimal distractions, good internet and other home office equipment. An often overlooked factor is to check that your VA has a proper desk and office chair. A domestic table, for instance, is not suitable for long term work, as it will be at the wrong height and will put unnecessary stress on your VA's back. Office chairs are ergonomically designed to provide comfort and support during the working day. A standard domestic chair will not provide this level of protection.



### Back up plan

Details of back up and contingency plans. Many UK virtual assistants work alone; this means that if they need to take some time off for illness or holiday, you and your business may be left without your valuable business support. One of the benefits of working with a larger business support organisation, such as Outhouse-UK is that their team work closely together and they will be able to provide you with consistent support, without you needing to worry about finding last minute cover for sickness or holiday (or even worse, having to do it yourself!)



### Proof

That they can provide examples of work on request. Always treat this as confidential and destroy any information once you've completed your verification process. They should also be able to provide good references or contacts to referees.



### The extra mile

It's a good indicator if candidates respond to your enquiries proactively, for instance making suggestions to help in your search.

Candidates must be efficient, of course, for instance you must expect them to respond to you swiftly during working hours.



### Knowledge

Finally, look for evidence of VAs caring about their customers' businesses, knowledge is a good starting place, for instance you should expect them to be well informed about industry sectors that they have worked in previously.

# Hired! But how do I work with my VA? Where do I start?



Start delegating to your VA as quickly as possible, to begin your working relationship. First though these simple steps will ensure that your relationship with your VA is productive, effective and fun!



## Expectations

Make sure expectations from both parties are clear. This will lead to you developing an ongoing relationship with someone who really understands you and your business.

Also ensure that all parameters of the role are clarified. You may have a long list of needs, or you may have an outline idea that you hope will develop over time. You should be prepared to spend some time with your VA talking them through any specific processes or bespoke software that you need them to access. You can, however, expect your VA to have a good understanding of most commonly used systems and office software.

Time expectations must be clear and measured.



## Contracts

The first step once you've found your perfect VA is to put in place a contract of terms and perhaps also a Non-Disclosure Agreement. These are usually simple, single page, documents, designed to protect your business confidentiality. Beware of working with any virtual assistant who doesn't have such documents available for you to sign.



## Resources

Setting up a corporate email address for your VA presents a uniform, professional face to your business if your VA will be communicating with clients and business contacts on your behalf. These can usually be implemented quickly and easily.

If you have specific 'phone or other equipment needs, you will need to supply your VA with these.

**“Other than that your VA will be a self-sufficient marvel, smoothly running your business administration while you concentrate on your area of expertise – your business.”**

# OUTHOUSE<sup>UK</sup>

Out of this world business support.

## About Outhouse-UK

Outhouse-UK is an outstanding Virtual Assistant service, providing business support for small business in the UK, enabling these businesses to shift their focus away from time consuming admin tasks and concentrate on the things that are most important for growing and running a business.

Renown for offering more than just admin support, Outhouse-UK can run an entire back office, providing valuable help and advice on all aspects of business administration, from typing to project management.

Outhouse-UK is the first choice for small businesses and entrepreneurs who are looking for top quality PA and secretarial support for their business, without the associated hassle of employing an assistant to do this.

## Get in touch

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