



INTELLIGENT OFFICE

The Virtual Assistant

PART 2 OF 3



How Specialized Virtual Assistants Provide A Competitive Edge

Countless small business owners rely on remote assistants or offsite receptionists to help with critical organizational duties. While some are content to offload simple tasks to self-employed, stay-at-home support people, others demand more comprehensive services.

Empowered by extensive training and client familiarity, specialized virtual assistants are able to provide a higher level of support. In turn, their daily schedules are filled with a broad spectrum of duties that allow entrepreneurs to focus their unique talents on growing their companies.



Executive-Level Capabilities for Specialized Needs

Whether they are communicating with clients, scheduling meetings or focusing on unique organizational responsibilities, specialized virtual assistants tackle diverse and demanding schedules. To meet a company's unique requirements, the virtual assistant will customize his or her day based on the client's list of priorities. To better understand just how diversified a virtual assistant's schedule can be, it helps to compare the average day of a self-employed, stay-at-home offsite assistant with that of an executive-level virtual assistant that is part of a greater brick-and-mortar presence.

The Limitations of a Basic Off-site Assistant

For the general off-site assistant, daily activities typically revolve around a home computer. Since they enjoy the freedom of remote contract work, these assistants are usually able to tailor their days any way they like.

An average morning might begin with a trip to the kitchen for a cup of coffee. The remote assistant may then run a few errands and tie-up other personal responsibilities. At some point, the off-site assistant centers before a laptop to tackle a number of basic administrative duties for a client. These would be tasks such as data entry, transcriptions and anything else that might be too tedious or time-consuming for a business owner. While important, these are usually not the types of tasks that would require training or supervision. The home-based assistant dutifully carries out each responsibility and then delivers the completed data based on a specified deadline.

If the remote assistant provides off-site receptionist services, he or she may also field personal calls throughout the day, distracting from client calls or the task at hand. Whatever the case, since they are often located in different states, and sometimes different countries, basic off-site assistants are not likely to have a strong familiarity with the organization for which they work. They are also likely to have limitations that would prevent them from communicating with a company's clients. In turn, the organization isn't likely to entrust the remote assistant with critical responsibilities, such as meeting preparations, scheduling, lead follow-ups or other upper-level responsibilities that demand comprehensive training.

The Advantages of a Specialized Virtual Assistant

While basic off-site support people fill their days with tedious organizational tasks, a true virtual assistant tackles a more demanding and diversified schedule. Because they have undertaken comprehensive training procedures, specialized virtual assistants bring a diverse skill set to the table that allows them to fulfill duties beyond the average remote assistant's capabilities.

Unlike work-from-home remote assistants, virtual assistants also train for specific clients, allowing them to play customized virtual roles essential to a company's success. This familiarity also allows them to tailor their services according to each company's operational practices and organizational requirements.

Not only are they able to meet a wide spectrum of demands, virtual assistants can customize their schedules to agree with a client's needs. This means that no two days are typically the same. For the specialized virtual assistant, however, the average day is likely to consist of any or all of the following:

Manage an organization's contact lists and customer spreadsheets

Schedule Meetings, make travel arrangements and maintain a calendar

Manage social media accounts

Handle correspondences

Transcribe notes, podcasts, interviews, videos, etc. for clients

Prepare and send out email newsletters

Handle personal errands, so a client can focus on key business issues

Perform billing and bookkeeping responsibilities

Prepare, collate, and ship meeting and send out requested information to customers

Address client inquiries by email or phone

Perform market research

Develop and maintain websites

Leverage specific industry knowledge in financial services, technology, law or health care to carry out specialized tasks

Because executive-level virtual assistants work as a part of a collective unit, availability is a constant. Businesses don't have to worry about delays related to vacations, sick days, and doctor appointments. Tasks are handled by a trained, professional team, working cohesively on a company's behalf. This ensures constant support that frees a business from being overly-reliant on a single remote assistant who may be unavailable when needed.

When Days Don't Go as Planned

While the specialized virtual assistant awakens each morning with a set schedule of critical responsibilities, he or she will often re-prioritize based on a client's needs. What was most important the previous day can take a back seat to unexpected needs. A small business owner may be confronted with an emergency that requires a shift in focus. Evolving circumstances might call for timely action to seize a new and fleeting opportunity. Whatever the case, the virtual assistant must be agile and refocus his or her attention as needed.

By maintaining constant availability, the virtual assistant is able to seamlessly adjust priorities in dynamic circumstances. Empowered by effective communications and a clear understanding of a company's unique needs, the assistant tailors his or her day to conform to a client's evolving requirements. In short: a virtual assistant's daily schedule depends greatly on a client's specific needs at any given time.

A Day in the Life of an Entrepreneur

Surveys suggest that most small business owners struggle to fit a day's worth of responsibilities into a single 24-hour period. According to a recent [poll](#), 82 percent of entrepreneurs work well over 40 hours a week, with 19 percent working more than 60 hours.

Much of this work centers on important, but tedious tasks that don't necessarily require the attention of a CEO. According to another recent [survey](#), 43 percent of small businesses spend more than six hours every week blogging, sharing, and tweeting about their business. That accounts for nearly a full day of work, which is one big reason why one-third of these business owners said they wished they could spend less time on social media.

When they spend too much time focusing on daily organizational duties, small business owners often become chronically overworked and overwhelmed. What's more, they aren't able to focus their talents on acquiring more customers, growing their businesses and boosting brand awareness.

With support from an executive-level virtual assistant, the modern business owner is able to tailor his or her schedule to address short- and long-term goals. Days go smoother, important tasks stop getting overlooked, and companies begin operating the way they should.



INTELLIGENT OFFICE

**Learn how easy it can be to take advantage
of Intelligent Office's many services.**

Follow us on Twitter [@IntelligentOfc](#) | Like us on [Facebook](#)

[Intelligent Office Blog](#) | [Intelligent Office Website](#)

[Domestic & International Franchise Opportunities](#)