

Virtual Assistance:

Buy Time, Save Money

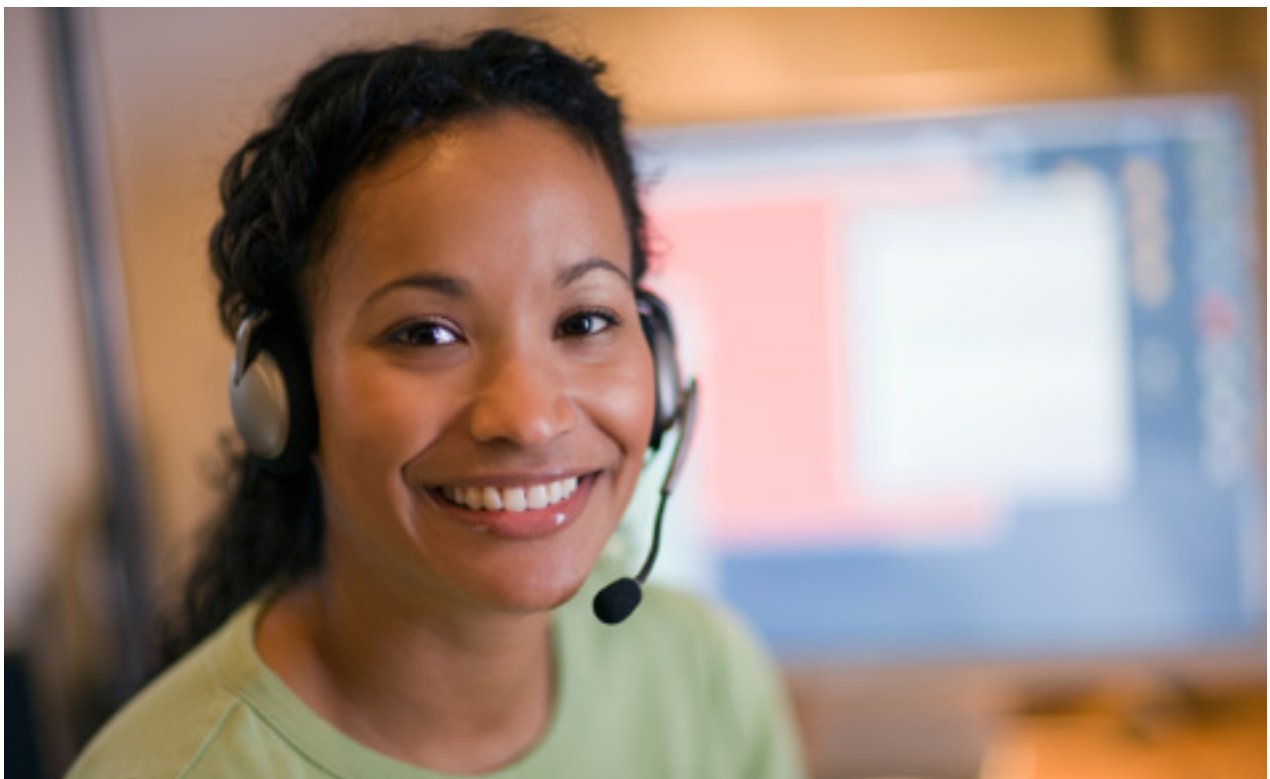
Time and money. Two things entrepreneurs never have enough of, but a virtual assistant can provide. No matter how experienced the entrepreneur, most new business ventures bring a new set of challenges and a lot of responsibilities across the board. In the early stages, the entrepreneur will be the one developing the products and services, promoting the business, hiring employees, and crunching the numbers, all in a day's work.

TEXT DANIELLE PALM

As the business grows, most entrepreneurs will find themselves drowning in work with negligible return on the effort invested in the business. The real added value in hiring a VA is that he or she will make sure the back office runs smoothly, allowing the entrepreneur to focus on client acquisition, brand development and of course, his or her core business. "A virtual assistant is basically an extra set of hands, brains and expertise most busy entrepreneurs need to successfully grow their business," said Emeli Colen, owner of BLACK.

Colen, a virtual assistant herself and a pioneer in the field of alternative workplace strategies in Curaçao, provides entrepreneurs with solutions that not only free up valuable time, but also saves them money. "A virtual assistant, or a VA, supports the back-end of a business at the fraction of the cost of hiring full-time help," she said. "You can outsource almost any task to a VA." VA's can specialize in secretarial, administrative work and marketing, as well as graphic design or ICT infrastructures.

Many start-up founders and small business owners are starting to see the benefits of hiring a virtual assistant. They usually have a limited amount of capital at their disposal, which means not being able to afford paying someone a full-time salary or renting an office building. Hiring someone who can take care of their back-office work remotely on an hourly





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basis, or only for a specific project, saves them time and money. As the business grows, they can expand their office space and staff. Since establishing her business in Curaçao last year, Colen has assisted several entrepreneurs remotely and has seen many businesses grow in that short period of time. “The challenges entrepreneurs face today is unprecedented. Successful businesses are those that can connect with their clients and that can quickly adapt to change. A virtual assistant allows you to cope with higher demands, deal with a smaller staff and provides you with specialist knowledge on projects, without the costs associated with full-time help.”

Although start-up founders and small business owners worldwide are increasingly hiring VA's, virtual assistance is a relatively unknown concept on the island. “In Curaçao,

the way to run a business is still based on principles from the industrial revolution era, which boils down to command and control. It seems that the belief is that a legitimate business must have full-time employees and managers to manage them, even if that means lower profits,” said Colen. Considering the rapid advancement in technology, entrepreneurs should consider modern methods that are available to make their business more efficient. A virtual assistant can help larger corporations streamline their business operations or meet seasonal demands; they can provide unique skills for a special project or step in to meet the demands of business growth. According to Colen, “Adding a VA to the mix makes larger corporations better able to cope with change and survive in the ever changing business landscape we know today.”

Hiring a virtual assistant is one of the easiest ways for both small and large companies to increase efficiency, while remaining adaptable to a changing environment. When a young company is starting to grow, it is both efficient and economical to hire a VA to take over the back office duties to free-up valuable time to allow the entrepreneur to work on growing the business. Colen remarked, “I am glad that start-up founders and small business owners are benefitting from virtual assistance and I'm sure the larger companies will follow suit. With a lot of patience and a phased approach, we can all benefit from a new perspective on work and workplaces.”

For more information on alternative workplace arrangements or virtual assistance, contact Emeli Colen at 513-0600 or visit her website (www.blackcuracao.com).