

Working with a Virtual Assistant

A short, honest guide to delegating well, what it costs, what to hand over first, and how to make the relationship work.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Why a VA is different from an employee, and what that saves you
- What it really costs, and what to expect for the money
- The tasks worth handing over first
- How to brief, communicate and get consistent work back
- What to check before you hire anyone

Buy back your time.

Virtuella is a UK virtual assistant agency. We interview, vet and match you with a VA who fits your business. Written by Ella Elliott, founder.

A VA is not an employee

A virtual assistant runs their own business. You are buying hours of finished work, not a seat in your office. That single difference changes the maths.

With an employee you also pay for:

- Desk space, equipment, software licences and utilities
- National Insurance, payroll administration and pension contributions
- Holiday, sick pay and the quiet hours between tasks

With a VA you pay for time worked, and nothing else. In practice, a twenty hour a week office role often becomes closer to ten hours of VA time, because none of it is spent waiting, commuting between tasks or making tea.

WORTH KNOWING

A VA sets their own hours, uses their own equipment and works for other clients too. That independence is what keeps the arrangement outside employment, so please do read up on IR35 if you are unsure where you stand.

What it costs

UK rates vary widely depending on experience and specialism. Most sit somewhere in the region of £25 to £45 an hour, with specialist skills at the higher end.

Our rates

£30 an hour on a monthly retainer, £35 an hour ad hoc. Matched VAs from our bench are quoted as one fully inclusive hourly rate.

Always ask

What is included? Calls, postage, software and any subscriptions should be clear before you start, not billed later.

What to hand over

Start with what drains you. The best first tasks are repeatable, low risk and easy to describe.

- Inbox and diary management, meeting prep and follow ups
- Recurring admin: invoicing, expenses, data entry, CRM tidying
- The jobs you keep pushing to Friday and never do
- Specialist work: bookkeeping, social media, design, research, copy

You do not need one person who can do everything. Different tasks can sit with different VAs, and because you only pay for hours worked, that costs you nothing extra.

Where to start

Next time you do a repeatable task, write down each step as you go. Screenshots, templates and logins included. Time yourself while you do it, that is the ceiling for how long it should take your VA once they are up to speed.

- Make the first task short, non urgent and free of sensitive data
- Share logins properly through a password manager, never over email
- Expect the first run to take longer, the third will be quicker than yours
- Listen if they suggest a better way, that is part of what you are paying for

Not sure what to delegate?

Fill in our short discovery questionnaire and we will map it out with you.

virtuella.info/discovery-form

Communication is the whole thing

Almost every VA relationship that fails, fails here. Not on skill, not on price. On the assumption that the other person knew.

- Agree a regular check in from the start, daily, weekly or monthly
- Say which channel you prefer and stick to it
- Share plans and changes early, a VA cannot act on what is in your head
- Give feedback quickly, small corrections early beat big ones later

Do

- Pay on time, and say so early if something is delayed
- Gather logins, files and contacts before work starts
- Set deadlines with a little breathing room
- Tell them when the work is good, a testimonial goes a long way

Please don't

- Expect on site work, the clue is in virtual
- Micromanage, they are a professional with other clients
- Ask them to work on commission only
- Ask for anything that breaks data or marketing rules

ONE MORE THING

Clients often enjoy the freedom so much that they disappear entirely. Lovely to see, but it is still your business, and some decisions will only ever be yours to make.

What to check before you hire

Anyone can call themselves a virtual assistant. These are the questions that separate a professional from an enthusiastic amateur.

Insurance

Professional indemnity cover in place, and happy to show you the policy.

Data protection

Registered with the ICO where required, and clear on how your data is stored.

Security

Proper antivirus, secure off site backups and a domain email, not a free inbox.

Contracts

A written agreement covering confidentiality, data and working arrangements.

Availability

Honest turnaround times, and a cut off for same day or next day work.

Cover

Solo VA: who steps in when they are ill or away? Team: who checks the quality?

A NOTE ON VERY CHEAP HELP

A low hourly rate can still be an expensive task. Work that takes an experienced VA fifteen minutes can take hours elsewhere, and if personal data is involved you remain responsible for how it is handled. Ask for a price per task, not just per hour.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

We do the vetting for you

Every VA we place has been interviewed by an experienced recruiter, with skills checked, references available on request, and confidentiality agreed as standard.

HOW MATCHING WORKS

- A free call to understand your business and where the time is going
- We shortlist VAs whose skills and working style genuinely fit
- You meet them and choose, no pressure and no obligation
- We handle contracts, onboarding and the first thirty days of check ins

Let's have a chat

Tell us what is eating your week and we will tell you honestly what kind of support you need, and how many hours it takes.

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This guide is general information based on our own experience of placing virtual assistants in the UK. It is not legal, tax or financial advice, and it is not a substitute for advice on your own circumstances. © Virtuella.