

## Are you working smart on your business or into DIY?

**D**O you often wonder why you seem to be busy all of the time and stressed with it yet never seem to be productive and effective?

It could be because you are trying to do everything yourself, writes **Carmen MacDougall**, MD and **Jacky Workman**, CE, IAVA.

When you work in the business it means you are allowing the business to run you. This could mean you managing your appointments and general administration.

No doubt, when you embarked upon setting up a business, you wanted to operate using your expert skills rather than spending most of your valuable time doing administrative tasks.

Working on the business is how every smart business owner should be operating. This means focusing your valuable business time with your clients carrying out your expert services.

If you knew you had reliable support behind the scenes, ensuring all the essentials were operating, would that make

a huge difference to what you would achieve? The awareness that we have been creating over the last 12 years to business owners and companies is that you must focus your valuable time on the core activities that will allow you to operate at 20 per cent to achieve the 80 per cent of results (The Pareto Principle).

When you set up your business, we are sure you would not have expected to also be your own PA or bookkeeper.

Technology has impacted hugely on the way we work and the way we communicate with our potential and existing clients.

So how does a business owner or cope with the challenge of running a business and doing what they do best without having to employ people, especially in these tough financial times?

The solution is to outsource and, in particular, to a Virtual PA known as a Virtual Assistant or VA. A VA is a self-employed business owner with areas of expertise such as administration, marketing, bookkeeping, web design and research.

Communication with your VA is done via email, fax or phone as they are based in their own office.

Your VA can be based locally or internationally depending on your own requirements.

To the outside world, they give the impression that they are part of your company.

A VA will only charge you for the time it takes to carry out the work. That can be from as little as £18 an hour depending on the work required.

There are no overheads, training, salary or benefits to pay for and they will be there, running your business for you, leaving you free to work smartly on developing your own business.

Remember, it is a false economy thinking you can do it yourself.

Outsourcing to a VA provides a genuine alternative to developing and carrying out your business tasks. They are cost effective and efficient and a VA also allows you to project a professional impression.

## DIRECTORY OF VIRTUAL ASSISTANT SERVICES

<b>Company Name</b> Bizpro <b>Tel:</b> 0844 414 2250 <b>Email/ Website:</b> info@bizpro-ltd.com <b>Description</b> Providing business administration, bookkeeping & support services throughout UK <b>Regions Covered</b> National	<b>Company Name</b> VA Today <b>Tel:</b> 0845 0097875 <b>Email/ Website:</b> allison@vatoday.co.uk <b>Description</b> High-calibre professional support to propel your business in 2010 <b>Regions Covered</b> Herts, Beds, Bucks, London and national	<b>Company Name</b> the office on the net <b>Tel:</b> 07718 588482 <b>Email/ Website:</b> lia@theofficeonthenet.co.uk <b>Description</b> Secretarial Services, Admin and Business Support <b>Regions Covered</b> All
<b>Company Name</b> Beacon Secretarial <b>Tel:</b> 023 9246 7107 Mob: 07904 835739 <b>Email/ Website:</b> linda@beaconsecretarial.co.uk <b>Description</b> For all your secretarial needs both virtually or in person <b>Regions Covered</b> Nationwide	<b>Company Name</b> Simply Assisting You Ltd <b>Tel:</b> 01392 248247 <b>Email/ Website:</b> help@simplyassistingyou.co.uk <b>Description</b> Telephone Answering, Telemarketing, PA Services, Admin Support, Database Creation & Management <b>Regions Covered</b> Nationwide	<b>Company Name</b> Flying Changes PA <b>Tel:</b> 01942 718488 / 07821 288055 <b>Email/ Website:</b> sharon@flyingchangespa.co.uk <b>Description</b> 25yrs experience – functional, ad-hoc, practical support dedicated to small businesses. <b>Regions Covered</b> UK and International
<b>Company Name</b> Business Visions <b>Tel:</b> 0845 838 8690 or 01676 536480 <b>Email/ Website:</b> enquires@businessvisions.co.uk <b>Description</b> Please see our main advert on page 35 <b>Regions Covered</b> National	<b>Company Name</b> OfficeGem South West <b>Tel:</b> 01626 366371 <b>Email/ Website:</b> info@officegemssouthwest.co.uk <b>Description</b> Audio/Copy Typing, Desktop Publishing and various other office services <b>Regions Covered</b> Nationwide	<b>Company Name</b> Alpha Office Support <b>Tel:</b> 01527 579941 <b>Email/ Website:</b> julie.laurie@virgin.net <b>Description</b> Secretarial Support for small businesses. <b>Regions Covered</b> Hereford, Worcester, Warwickshire
<b>Company Name</b> Elliott Enterprises <b>Tel:</b> 01483 215 088 <b>Email/ Website:</b> office@elliottenterprises.co.uk <b>Description</b> Telephone answering - save staff costs - all secretarial services and book-keeping. <b>Regions Covered</b> Surrey, Ireland, Henley on Thames and Hampshire as well as the local district.	<b>Company Name</b> Versatile Assistant Limited <b>Tel:</b> 0845 299 0408 <b>Email/ Website:</b> info@versatileassistant.com <b>Description</b> Professional Virtual Assistants providing remote personal assistance and telephone answering <b>Regions Covered</b> UK wide, Europe and Australia	<b>Company Name</b> Strawberry Office <b>Tel:</b> 01522 754735 / 07840 056941 <b>Email/ Website:</b> Anne@strawberryoffice.com <b>Description</b> Professional, flexible, secretarial and office administration support <b>Regions Covered</b> United Kingdom
<b>Company Name</b> Flexy Office (UK) Ltd <b>Tel:</b> 020 7863 7500 <b>Email/ Website:</b> info@flexyoffice.co.uk <b>Description</b> Canary Wharf London business address, phone answering and meeting rooms. <b>Regions Covered</b> National	<b>Company Name</b> Chaos to Calm Consulting <b>Tel:</b> 01234 862101 <b>Email/ Website:</b> info@chaos-to-calm.com <b>Description</b> Virtual assistance, business management, marketing, tenders, events, web, recruitment, psychometrics <b>Regions Covered</b> Nationwide, particularly London, Anglia and South East	<b>Company Name</b> Help Ahoy <b>Tel:</b> 01278 588448 <b>Email/ Website:</b> info@helpahoy.com <b>Description</b> PA/Secretarial Support for entrepreneurs wanting to work SMARTER not HARDER. <b>Regions Covered</b> Based in Somerset & Cover Nationally
<b>Company Name</b> Oniva Ltd <b>Tel:</b> 01983 874610 <b>Email/ Website:</b> sallyj@onivaltd.com <b>Description</b> You run the business, we'll run the office <b>Regions Covered</b> National	<b>Company Name</b> Bay Tree VA <b>Tel:</b> 07790 721133 <b>Email/ Website:</b> jane@baytreeva.co.uk <b>Description</b> Project assistance; shorthand; co-ordinating meetings/ events; travel arrangements; research; minute-taking. <b>Regions Covered</b> Suffolk, Cambridge, Essex and Norfolk	<b>Company Name</b> Fridaygirl.com Limited <b>Tel:</b> 0845 644 4384 <b>Email/ Website:</b> delegate@fridaygirl.com <b>Description</b> Professional and approachable. Visit our website for full details. <b>Regions Covered</b> We are located in Cornwall and look after clients throughout the UK and internationally.
<b>Company Name</b> VMC Executive Assistance Ltd <b>Tel:</b> 01737 833940 <b>Email/ Website:</b> Vivian@executive-assistant.co.uk <b>Description</b> Offering Secretarial, Admin & Book-keeping services to businesses and individuals. <b>Regions Covered</b> Surrey & Central London	<b>Company Name</b> NotebookandPen Ltd <b>Tel:</b> 07916 594304 <b>Email/ Website:</b> linda@notebookandpen.com <b>Description</b> Fast, reliable and versatile PA/Secretary. 10% discount on first order. <b>Regions Covered</b> Based in Derby, but cover is nationwide.	<b>Company Name</b> Metro House Ltd <b>Tel:</b> 01253 792992 <b>Email/ Website:</b> karen@metrohouse.co.uk <b>Description</b> Business address, telephone, web site + secretarial services/admin support. <b>Regions Covered</b> Nationwide