

VIRTUALLY BLOOMING

An ezine from



VOLUME IV, ISSUE 9

An ezine for busy, ambitious small business professionals.

Researched, written and published by your Business is Blooming Virtual Assistant (V.A.) team. We're the hidden part of your business team.

"Growing your business is our passion. Our success is linked."

Solutions for Busy Professionals!

In this issue:

* *Case Study: Setting up a small business and running marketing plans*

* *Earn a FREE hour of services from your Virtual Assistance team!*

* *"Resource Central:"*
-Professional Directory
-Find dead links
-Buy used textbooks

* *"Top Tips:"*
-Eliminate unnecessary tasks

* *Up Close & Personal:"*
Virtual Assistant business goes to the dogs!

* *Testimonial: how Business is Blooming helped a client*

*"You never
achieve real
success unless
you like what
you are doing."*

--Dale Carnegie

"VIRTUAL RESCUE"

A Real-Life Case Study

TODAY: Business Setup and Marketing the Techie

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Business is Blooming organizes a small business' back-end administrative system, and then launches and coordinates a marketing plan that grows sales by \$100,000 within a year.

THE PROBLEM:

Advanced Computer Solutions' tagline is, "Modern technology and old-fashioned customer service." The problem was that "old-fashioned" also applied to how the business was being run. While the owner, Brad, was outstanding technically and had top-notch customer relationship skills, he lacked small business management and marketing skills.

Brad was so busy doing the "work" that he was overwhelmed at the thought of marketing and office administration. So he didn't really do anything. His marketing strategy consisted of, "I'll get referrals." This strategy would be a long, slow process to build a stable business and income.

THE SOLUTION:

Tracee stepped in and first tackled the administrative details and organization. Systems needed to put in place before Brad could even think about bringing in more customers and straining an already overextended organization.

Tracee gathered all the customer intake forms scattered over the office, and created a customer database. Next came creation of all necessary business forms and stationary, including business cards. Then she sorted through historical data and set up a bookkeeping system and a process for taxes.

Once the office was whipped into shape, Tracee turned her attention to the marketing question--how could they grow the business with minimal investment? She focused on the target audience, developed and priced tactics, then presented options. She recommended and executed the following activities that brought in \$100,000 in new business!

- Designed compelling business logo.
- Created display ad and arranged for Yellow Pages advertising.
- Produced business brochure and flyers.
- Wrote, produced, printed, and mailed out client newsletter.
- Joined the local Chamber of Commerce and helped network.
- Designed and ordered logo business shirts for employees.

- Wrote press releases about an office move and coordinated publicity photos.
- Handled employee hiring. Wrote job description, placed ads, and conducted pre-interviews, created interview questions (including a clever "fake" question to ensure technical skills).

Hiring a virtual assistant was a great time-saving and sales-building tactic for this small but growing business.

10 ways to use your Virtual Assistant:

1. *Coordinate marketing plans*
2. *Hire and interview employees*
3. *Answer phone or return calls*
4. *Create and update websites*
5. *Write and send press releases*
6. *Publish and send a client newsletter*
7. *Create brochures and flyers*
8. *Conduct research on the internet*
9. *Order promotional products with your logo*
10. *Brainstorm ideas and act as a sounding board*

The "ASK US" PROMOTION: Special Offer!

Are you always saying, "I'm too busy," or, "I would love to, but I just don't have the time."?

We hear that from a lot of our clients. We also hear that once they invest a few minutes to get us onto a project, they are freed up to focus on the important, business-growing tactics they are best at doing.



Get a Free Hour of Services!

Take 2 minutes--right now!--to shoot us a note and let us customize a solution to remove one administrative, marketing, or customer-support issue from your busy plate. We'll give you a quote for the service.

As a reward--just for asking us!--we'll give you one free hour of services! Free!

Why are we doing this? Well, we know first-hand that the hardest part of running a small business is the "small" things that get in the way of "big" things. So let's work together to get rid of one thing that is taking up your time.

To get your FREE hour of services, simply fill out the *Request for Proposal* form on our website, or shoot us an email at info@bloomnow.com.

<http://www.bloomnow.com/rfp>

"RESOURCE CENTRAL"

Top Resources for Today's Busy Small Business Professional

You don't have time to hunt down data and resources to help grow your business, market it more effectively, and run your life better. Luckily, internet research is one thing we do well! We'll research helpful sites and resources and review them for you.

- 1) **HAVE YOU BEEN "ZIGGED"?:** Ziggs.com is a FREE online professional directory that features your business profile. Unlike other search vehicles, you can search by name, field, location or keyword to find a business professional or have prospects find YOU. Ziggs has over 3 million professionals listed. Setup your free profile today:

<http://www.ziggs.com>

- 2) **DOES YOUR WEBSITE HAVE DEAD LINKS?** Here's an easy way to check the links on your business website. This free software reviews your website and produces a report of broken or dead links. It can also check the links from your site to your site.

<http://home.snafu.de/tilman/xenulink.html>

"You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take."

--Wayne Gretzky

- 3) **BUY USED TEXTBOOKS ONLINE:** It's back to school time. If you have kids headed to college, or if you are taking courses yourself, you know how expensive textbooks can be. Consider buying them used online:

<http://www.addall.com>

<http://www.switchtextbooks.com>

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/textbooks/>

Life is tough; it takes a lot of your time."

--Sean Morey, comedienne

"TOP TIPS"

Quick Time-Saving Tips from Your Virtual Administrative Professionals



Time! Time! Time! Wish we all had more! Part of running a business is finding ways to streamline and simplify many of our ongoing tasks. As long-time administrative professionals, we know LOTS of shortcuts. Here's a big one:

Eliminate Useless, Time-Consuming Activities

Robert W. Bly, author of [101 Ways to Make Every Second Count](#), says, "My colleague, consultant Jeffrey Lant, has a full-time housekeeper. When I first learned this, I thought, 'He's crazy--why should an able-bodied man have a housekeeper?' Now I've come around to his point of view. The more hours you spend doing trivial activities, the fewer hours you have for important work."

So, learn to eliminate useless, time-consuming activities that distract your focus from profitable, business-building or quality family time. Just because you "can" do it, doesn't mean you "should" do it.

We all have 168 hours per week to balance business goals and family needs. How much is your time worth per hour? Calculate it. Then be willing to hire other people to do as many of the "non-critical tasks" as you can.

If it costs less to hire someone to do the work--do it! If you charge \$100 per hour, and have to spend 8 hours a week cleaning, grocery shopping and cooking, it may pay to have someone do those tasks for you. Bly says, "To maximize your productivity, income and output, meaningful work must be a priority."

Take the challenge! Eliminate something this week!

Take a few minutes and brainstorm some "non-critical" tasks in your personal life that you do every week that need to be done that someone else could do. Ideas include:

- Dog walking
- Commuting/Driving
- Sorting email/spam
- Chauffeuring the kids
- Cooking, cleaning
- Gardening/lawn mowing
- Shopping for gifts, clothes, household items
- Paying bills, opening mail
- Errands such as going to the bank or post office

Hiring services is easy; ask friends for referrals or look in your Yellow Pages. There are concierge services that will help with many tasks. Experiment. Try it. If you don't like it, you can always go back to doing it yourself.

CALL US!

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"UP CLOSE & PERSONAL"**Get to Know Your Virtual Assistant**

If you've called virtual assistant Tracee Chamberlain on the phone and gotten her voicemail, you've heard the message that she "might be out walking her 4-legged office assistants." Who are these canines and why are they so important to her?

**Tracee's dogs are special!**

These dogs are special indeed; both were rescued from shelters. These "BAUSSIE" mixes (Border Collie and Australian Sheepdog) are full of energy and zest for life. Meeka was adopted 2 years ago at 5 years old after being found dirty, matted and sick. Today she's happy, sweet and grateful to be Tracee's Office Supervisor.

Bear was found as a puppy through an online shelter: <http://www.petfinder.com>. He's full of fun and has been a "star" at his puppy obedience class. He's thinking about a career playing flyball or even graduating to agility classes.

Adopting abandoned/orphaned dogs is a challenge; they each have a history and their own issues. Developing knowledge about dogs and obedience has made Tracee a bit of an expert-in-training. "Everywhere I go, people ask me advice about dogs," she says. "But I love learning and reading about it."

"THEY SAID IT!"**A recent testimonial for our virtual assistance & consulting services**

"My favorite things about working with you are people saying how friendly you are and also people asking where your desk is in my apartment."

Chris M., Photographer, New York

If you are a current customer and you'd like to be featured in this segment and receive X, send your testimonial to editor@bloomnow.com.

We hope you've enjoyed your ezine for busy, ambitious small business professionals.

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