

TheVACoach

Support for your virtual assistance practice.

Marketing Ideas for Your Virtual Assistance Business

Erin Blaskie

www.TheVACoach.com

www.ErinBlaskie.com

Congratulations!

Creating your virtual assistance business is an exciting yet overwhelming venture. It can be very difficult to know what to do, when to do it and how to achieve the goals you need to achieve in order to make your business a success.

This guide was created to help new (*and veteran!*) virtual assistance business owners market their business and attract new clients. We are hoping that when you are finished reading this guide that you too are able to set out and increase the number of clients that are coming to your business on a consistent and regular basis.



My own journey into my virtual assistance business was one of solitude. I started my business in 2004 when the idea of a virtual assistant was just sprouting and when most people I spoke with had no idea what it was we did as VAs. Since there were not many successful virtual assistants blazing the trail, I had to go it alone. Without a mentor, without advice and without a support group around me.

Within two weeks of opening my virtual doors, I had my first client – found on Elance.com. Within six months, I was able to quit my full-time, “real” job and jump into being an entrepreneur full-time. It’s been years since that day and the landscape of the virtual assistance industry is much different now.

However, one thing has remained unchanging over time and that is the need for virtual assistants to market their own businesses and, in order to be successful, have to learn how to become a marketer – without any training. This guide will hopefully teach you

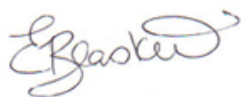
something, as it is the culmination of my years of experience and my Advertising & Public Relations educational background.

When you are finished reading the guide, I would love to hear from you. You can e-mail me any time at erin.blaskie@gmail.com (*my private, personal e-mail address*) and tell me if any of these ideas helped you generate business. I would love to share your success story with my audience and link to your website so that people can see you walking your talk.

I am also going to encourage you to continue investing in yourself and your education so that you aren't forging through your VA business alone. I have many different options for virtual assistants and you will hear about those options, over time, via e-mail.

I look forward to an on-going relationship and the ability to stand in service to you – a virtual assistant who has been there and can shine light into the dark corners of entrepreneurship.

To your virtual assistance success,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Erin Blaskie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Erin Blaskie

www.TheVACoach.com

www.ErinBlaskie.com

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1. Go Social

I am starting your marketing journey with the easiest step of all. Many of you will have already done this step and some of you will not yet have done so. If you haven't, this is the first thing you want to do because web real estate is hard to come by so you want to secure your goods quickly.



ACTION STEP – HOOTSUITE

We're starting with Hootsuite because Hootsuite is what you are going to use to manage all of your social media profiles once you have that setup. Hootsuite has a publisher area that allows you to pre-schedule social media updates and choose the accounts, time and date of each update. In short, it's going to let you market your business during regular business hours so you can focus on billable hours.

1. Go to www.hootsuite.com
2. Setup your free account
3. Jot down your user name and password as we'll come back to this in a bit

ACTION STEP – FACEBOOK

Let's turn our attention to Facebook. Facebook is going to be where you will setup a page for your business to attract new, potential customers and engage and interact with existing ones.

1. Go to www.facebook.com and create an account in your name (if you already have a personal account, that is fine too – you just need an account)
2. Go to www.facebook.com/pages/ and click “Create a Page”
3. Setup a Facebook page for your business, in your business’ name, so that you can interact and engage with people interested in your business and your company
4. Make sure to add your logo / branding to the page in the profile picture area
(having a branded Facebook fan page is excellent if you can afford to have one made – otherwise, come back to this step later on)

Examples of Facebook fan pages, which have been customized/, branded:

<http://www.bsetc.com/category/portfolio/facebook-fan-pages/>

ACTION STEP – TWITTER

The next social media site we are going to setup is your Twitter account. Twitter is another popular social media website that will allow you to attract new, potential customers.

1. Go to www.Twitter.com and setup your free account
2. When choosing your Twitter handle, I highly recommend going with your name or your business name *(whichever you want to be branded by long-term – I have chosen to do both @ErinBlaskie and @TheVACoach and @bsetc so that my real*

estate is taken up by me and not someone else)

3. Customize your Twitter profile with a branded background or the colors of your brand and change the avatar / profile picture to your photo or your business' logo
4. Update the profile area so that every area is filled in – full name, about me, web address, etc.

Examples of Twitter backgrounds branded / customized:

<http://www.bsetc.com/category/portfolio/twitter-backgrounds/>

ACTION STEP – LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is an excellent social media site for business professionals. You'll want to make sure that you have a profile setup there as well as your company profile setup.

1. Go to www.Linkedin.com and create your free account
2. Fill out as much of the profile as possible to get your status / progress as close to 100% as you can
3. Add your blog (*if you have one*) via the WordPress widget
4. Bring in your Tweets as status updates if you do not plan on logging into LinkedIn directly to make / post updates

Now, let's fill out the company profile:

1. Go to Companies and create your company profile by adding a new company to LinkedIn's database
2. Make sure to add all of your company's information, contact information, etc.
3. Add your company's products and services and make sure to put detailed information in there and links where possible

ACTION STEP – SETUP HOOTSUITE

Now that we have our social media profiles done, we'll want to go back to Hootsuite to finish up what we need to do there.

1. Add / connect all of your social media profiles inside of Hootsuite
2. Make sure to test each one of them by putting a status update through Hootsuite
3. Choose which columns you want to view whenever you login to Hootsuite so that it is setup for maximum use

ACTION STEP – PLAN YOUR UPDATES

Now that we have Hootsuite in place and connected to all of your social media accounts, it is now time to plan your updates. Using Excel, create a new spreadsheet and label the columns: Date, Time, Update, Facebook, Twitter. You are going to want to aim for at least 2-3 updates per day across each social media site. Since your Tweets are being pulled into LinkedIn, we don't need to worry about LinkedIn being updated.

Now, fill out that spreadsheet with updates that are no more than 140 characters in length and determine if they should go to Facebook, Twitter or both.

Some ideas on social media updates:

- **Give people ideas on things they can outsource.** For example: “Still answering your own e-mail? Create some boundaries by having a VA do that for you! #VA”
- **Let people know what you are working on so that they can see how they could use your services too.** For example: “Working on an ezine for a client! I love these creative projects!”
- **Ask questions that will engage people in conversation.** For example: “What is on your to-do list that you would LOVE to outsource RIGHT NOW?”
- **Showcase / highlight interesting things that your clients are doing.** For example: “I love @ErinBlaskie’s new program for individuals struggling with cash flow! Check it out here: LINK”

Once you have a month’s worth of updates written in your spreadsheet, use Hootsuite’s Publisher tool to pre-schedule them into the future. This way, regardless of what you are doing, you won’t miss out on updating your potential clients. Just be sure to watch your @ replies on Twitter often and the follow-up likes and comments on Facebook. The conversation won’t continue if you aren’t there to help it along.

SYSTEMS READY, NOW – ENGAGE!

Once you have your systems in place, it is now time to take a more pro-active role on Twitter and Facebook. Seek out your ideal clients by utilizing some of the pre-existing tools that exist in social media. Your goal should be to reach out and follow or converse with at least 10-20 new prospects per day. Sounds like a lot right? Well, it is but if you are serious about growing your business, it won't seem like enough.

To find people who could potentially be your ideal client, use the following tools for Twitter:

- <http://WeFollow.com/>
- <http://justtweetit.com/>
- <http://twellow.com/>
- <http://www.tweetertags.com/>

On Facebook you can search groups and pages to find areas where your target market is hanging out. For example, if you love working with coaches, look for groups on Facebook that are devoted to coaches and their growing businesses.

On LinkedIn you can also use groups to find ideal prospects. Once found, join the group and engage with the people inside of it by providing interesting, relevant information and providing advice and support to its members. This will help position you as someone who is a resource center.

Whichever site you decide to start engaging through, you want to make an effort on a consistent basis. Schedule time into your calendar to engage, follow new people, interact, chat with and provide assistance and you will see a noticeable difference in your exposure to potential clients.

2. Network, Network, Network

The idea of networking scares people because they instantly think of in-person events where they have to pitch themselves or their services to a group of strangers. The good news is that it isn't always that way. The trick to networking is to find a group of people that you feel



comfortable around. Whether that is an online group or an offline group, it really doesn't matter. You just want to be surrounded by people who are similar to you yet provide different services and who could potentially use your services.

ACTION STEP – FIND AN ONLINE FORUM

People might scream at me for this one, as many people believe that online forums are outdated. However, they can be an amazing place to get business support and meet new people. Given that your business is entirely virtual, you have no need to actually meet your clients face-to-face and many virtual assistants actually prefer that.

1. Go to Google and type in your target industry + forum (*alternatively, message board works too!*)
2. Look for active forums that people are using often and engaging with each other on

3. Setup your free account and begin being a part of the conversations and providing help where / when you can
4. Be sure to setup your account and profile with as much information as they will allow and if they allow custom signatures, add your website address!

The goal is not to join forums and spam everyone with your business. The goal is to learn more about the industry you want to serve, stay on the forefront of what is new and interesting and provide value to the people inside the community so that they take notice of you.

ACTION STEP – FIND AN IN-PERSON GROUP

Another way to network is in-person. This will allow you to meet people who are local to you and who may provide services that are complimentary to yours. Local business tends to be a tight-knit community so once you get to know a few people, it generally starts to open doors to new possibilities.

The key here, just like the online forum, is to find a group of people who resonate with you. For example, when I started looking for places to network locally, I looked at groups that had young entrepreneurs inside of them and who were doing really awesome, creative projects. I happened to find a group called GenYOTT and began attending their events where I met a ton of local business people.

Even though my goal while I am there is simply to just meet people and get out of my solo office, I usually walk away with some sort of business lead or opportunity, which is worth exploring.

To find local groups in your area:

- Google “networking group” + your town / city and see what pops up
- Check with your local Chamber of Commerce / business center
- Check any events calendars that might be posted online for your community
- Ask your colleagues
- Ask your followers on your social media accounts
- Check your local area on www.meetup.com

3. Create a Website that Sells & Converts

Another major area to focus on is your website. Most virtual assistant's websites present like a brochure. They give some information on the business, the services offered and rates but don't provide an experience for the potential client.



ACTION STEP – CHECK YOUR WEBSITE AGAINST OUR CHECKLIST

Since most virtual assistant's websites lack the information needed to convert a prospect into a client, we've created a checklist for you to follow to make sure you're your website is up-to-par.

You'll want to make sure that your website:

1. Shares stories, case studies or portfolio items so that potential clients can see themselves in your clients
2. Contains an opt-in box that is connected to MailChimp, or another similar service, to collect the names and e-mail addresses of your prospects in exchange for a free download / giveaway
3. Has follow-up autoresponders / messages that go out to your prospects after they subscribe to your freebie – these follow-up messages will sell your company and your services and provide information to your prospects

4. Contains more “you” language than “I” language – your website should focus on the client and not on yourself and your business
5. Tells the story about how the business came to be, why you serve who you serve and any other information that you can share to break down the unknown factor and speed up the know, like and trust factor

If your website is lacking in any of these areas, plan an overhaul of your website before you start marketing your business. If you market your business before your foundation is solid, you will waste your efforts.

ACTION STEP – PREPARING YOUR OPT-IN FOR YOUR WEBSITE

One of the items in the checklist above referred to the creation of your opt-in, which would be connected to your free giveaway. You’ll want to create an opt-in for your website so that you can actively build a list of potential prospects to market your future products and services to.

Here are the steps you’ll want to take to get this in place:

- Setup an account at MailChimp or another similar e-mail marketing tool
- Create a dedicated list / autoresponder inside of your account for the freebie
- Determine what your freebie will be (*more on that in a moment*)
- Create, format and publish your freebie (*more on that in a moment*)
- Attach the freebie download link to an autoresponder message
- Create a thank you page on your website
- Add the opt-in box code to your website

Make sure to test the entire process and have others test it for you too. The key here is to make sure that it is easy to follow, even for non-technical people, and interesting enough to make people want to opt-in for it.

ACTION STEP – PREPARING THE FREEBIE

When preparing your freebie, you want to think to yourself, “What is the biggest problem that my target market has right now and how can I help them fix it?” Once you’ve figured that out, you have the first idea for your freebie.

For example, on www.bsetc.com, we knew that our prospect’s biggest problem was figuring out where to start when it came to delegation. We created a delegation handbook that also includes thirty ideas of things that they can delegate away immediately.

Once you’ve chosen your topic, write the freebie using Microsoft Word (or something similar), format it to look professional, add some imagery and have a cover designed for it. If you want to increase conversions, consider getting a 3D image of the e-book cover designed as well.

Once finished, turn the Word document (*or otherwise*) into a PDF and upload it to your server, your WordPress site or wherever else you generally host your files.

Now, create a thank you page on your website that thanks opt-ins for requesting the download and explains to them that they’ll need to confirm before receiving the download page (*this is relevant if you have double opt-in turned on inside of your e-mail marketing tool*).

Connect the opt-in code to that thank you page and add the code to the sidebar of your website. Add some copy along with the opt-in box and the 3D image, if you decided to go with that. Test, test and test again to make sure that it is working.

Inside of your e-mail marketing program, set the confirmation URL to another page on your website that you will create. This page will contain a link to the download and any other instructions required (*password, etc.*) Finally, add an autoresponder that will go out once the prospect confirms that also contains download information.

4. Walk Your Talk, Repeatedly

Where many virtual assistants falter is in walking their talk. What that means is doing for yourself what you would do for clients. For example: if a virtual assistant claims to be a web designer or a graphic designer yet their own website and graphics leave something to be desired, the client will instantly lose faith in your proclaimed service ability.



The key here is to try different things yourself and see what goes into making them work or not work. Over the seven years of owning my own virtual assistance business, I spent much of my time building side businesses as well. Coaching practice, directory site, membership site, info-products, online training, etc. To the outside world I may have appeared like I had a bad case of entrepreneurial ADD but what I was doing was learning through experience.

Now, that isn't to say that you should rush out and start a bunch of businesses tomorrow. However, you should understand that a client is going to be looking at what you are doing to see if you can truly help them.

ACTION STEP – ENHANCE YOUR POTENTIAL CLIENTS EXPERIENCE

Now that you know why walking your talk is so important, let's turn our attention to your website and your business. The goal is to walk the client through your business all the while having them say to themselves, "Ooo, I like that! I want that for my business!"

The more relevant you are, the more likely they are to hire you because they'll see that you already "get it".

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **If you are an admin virtual assistant:** make sure that your correspondence from the very beginning with your potential client is smooth and contains great systems. Consider setting up something like Tungle for your appointment setting, Grasshopper for your voice mail system and use fillable PDFs when collecting information from your clients.
- **If you are a social media assistant:** make sure that your own social media accounts are in use and optimized. Make sure your branding on these sites is tight and makes good use of the space (*ie: create a branded Facebook fan page with opt-in for yourself.*)
- **If you are a creative virtual assistant:** make sure that your site is exciting and engaging and be sure to have a lot of items in your portfolio so that potential clients can see the type of work you do and your style.

If you do decide to create micro-businesses, the best ones to create are businesses that will be complimentary to what you are already doing. For example: if you are supporting coaches and speakers, consider creating a few info-products that will help them solve problems. Or, create a how-to series that you can sell that is related to a service you offer. The ideas are limitless once you tap into them!

5. Speak on Related Topics to the VA Industry

A lot of virtual assistants are taking a deep breath in right now. The idea of speaking generally scares business owners but what they don't realize is how vital it is to creating a successful business.

Speaking is an excellent way to share your expertise and market your business at the same time. Plus, you can build up an excellent database of resources that your future potential clients can tap into.

What you want to be looking for are opportunities to speak on the subject of outsourcing, delegating, working with a VA and any other topics that will teach others how they can work with you and why they should.



ACTION STEP – ASK YOUR CLIENTS

The first place you'll want to look for potential speaking gigs is with your clients. Offer to do a teleseminar with their audience / list on the subject of outsourcing and delegation. Offer an incentive to your client for doing so. Maybe you give them 5% of all services sold from their call or you give them a straight referral fee per client.

Either way, ask your clients and see what they say. The good news is that every single business owner on the planet could potentially use the services of a virtual assistant, so the topic is on point for every audience.

Some ideas for speaking topics:

- 5 Ways to Work with a Virtual Assistant
- 3 Ways to Free Up Your Schedule Starting Today
- Outsourcing 101 / Delegating 101 / Virtual Assistance 101

ACTION STEP – WATCH HARO FOR OPPORTUNITIES

The next thing you want to do is sign up for notification e-mails at HARO (link in the resources section). HARO (aka, Help a Reporter Out) is a place where the media goes to look for resources for news pieces, speaking engagements and more. By registering to their e-mail service, you'll be signed up to get three daily e-mails – all containing possible opportunities.

Every day, browse through these resources to see if any of them are related to your industry and your expertise. If so, send in your response and see what happens! Any media and publicity you can get for your business is great!

ACTION STEP – HOST YOUR OWN EVENT

If you don't want to ask your clients and you aren't finding opportunities on HARO, consider hosting your own free teleseminar! These are excellent to do because it is a perfect list building opportunity and you'll be able to market to these individuals at a later date.

Here are the steps to take to host your own teleseminar event:

- Choose a topic and write a catchy title and description (ideas above)

- Choose a date and time
- Setup a page on your website that describes the call and all of the details
- In your e-mail marketing program, setup a new list for those subscribers
- Add the event details to the follow-up autoresponder in your new list
- Setup a thank you page that people will go to once they sign up for the event
- Add all of the details to the thank you page
- Create the opt-in form from your e-mail marketing program
- Add it to the event sign-up page
- Market your event on social media sites and on free event listing sites
- Create the event as a Facebook event and a LinkedIn event, invite contacts
- Ask your clients to help you promote the event
- Write a script ahead of time so you can follow along and stay on track
- Host your event using Free Conference Call and make sure to record the call
- At the end of the event, offer a special, a sale or some sort of upsell
- Once the call is over, send out the recording to everyone who registered
- Update the web page to describe the event as a pre-recorded call
- Continue to let people opt-in for the call on an on-going basis

Host at least one call per month to see maximum results! You don't just need to focus on the delegation / outsourcing aspect either. If you offer services that a call would compliment, host a call on those topics too! For example: offer a Facebook 101 class and upsell a Facebook fan page.

Be creative as your clients will be looking at what you are doing on the web as a good example of what you can do for them.

Resources

In this section you will find a list of the resources we've mentioned in this e-book, in alphabetical order, plus a few other helpful resources. In full disclosure, some of these are affiliate links. If you wish not to use our affiliate links, simply Google the name of the tool we've referenced. If you do use our affiliate link, thank you and good link karma to you!

E-mail Marketing Programs

1ShoppingCart

<http://www.marketerschoice.com/app/?pr=6&id=96539>

MailChimp

<http://eepurl.com/GMR3>

Marketing

AdImpact

<http://www.adimpact.com/?aid=2501>

Help a Reporter Out

<http://www.helpareporter.com/>

Submit Your Article

<http://www.submyarticle.com/affiliates/idevaffiliate.php?id=1313>

Networking

Meetup.com

<http://www.meetup.com>

Project Management Tools

Basecamp

<http://www.basecampHQ.com/?referrer=ERINBLASKIE>

Web Collaboration

<https://webcollaboration.com/?ref=erinblaskie>

Social Media

Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com> / www.facebook.com/pages/

Hootsuite

<http://www.hootsuite.com>

LinkedIn

<http://www.linkedin.com>

Twitter

<http://www.twitter.com>

Teleseminar Resources

Audio Acrobat

<http://bsetc.audioacrobat.com/>

Free Conference Call

<http://www.freeconferencecall.com/>

Web Hosting & Website Resources

Bluehost.com

<http://www.bluehost.com/track/eblaskie2>

Templatic

<http://templatic.com/members/go.php?r=426&i=l0>

WishList

<http://member.wishlistproducts.com/wlp.php?af=1375487>

Next Steps

Congratulations!

You now have more marketing tools to add to your tool belt when it comes to marketing your virtual assistance business.

We have a few other options as next steps for your virtual assistance business and we've outlined those below. Feel free to browse through the options and do let us know if we can be of support!

Ace Your Potential Client Calls E-Book

Our newest e-book is out and ready for purchase! Ace Your Potential Client Calls will teach you everything you need to know about doing initial calls to sell your services. The e-book includes:

- The Potential Client Call Explained
- The Potential Client Call Intake Process
- The Potential Client Call Script
- The Potential Client Call Checklist
- How to Deal with Fear and Objections
- Recognizing Red Flags: The Clients to Avoid
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on Potential Client Calls



[Learn more and purchase your copy here.](#)

E-Commerce & E-Mail Marketing – Self-Study Program

The eCommerce & E-mail Marketing Course is perfect for virtual assistants who want to learn how to use 1ShoppingCart for their own businesses or to offer as a service within their own virtual assistance business. E-commerce and e-mail marketing are two of the hottest skills for virtual assistants to possess and allow VAs to earn more and market to a much wider audience.



The eCommerce & E-mail Marketing Course is an intense 10 hours of training. You will have access to video demonstrations with audio (a live screen capture of my screen and my training) as well as a library of applicable resources. You will see a visual of my screen as I walk you through all aspects of this training. On top of that, you'll also receive the video recordings. This way, you can reference the videos and training material at a later date or go back over anything that you didn't get the first time.

[Learn more and purchase your copy here.](#)

Online Marketing Plan Template

Are you struggling with putting your marketing plan down on paper? Do you need to submit an online marketing plan to someone but you have no idea where to start?



This Online Marketing Plan Template will help you gain clarity in a quick and easy method. You can begin to outline your strategies and key events / timelines so that you aren't operating your business in day-to-day mode.

The template will:

- Outline common online marketing strategies to take the think work out of it
- Prompt you in terms of the information you need to include / provide
- Give you ideas for timelines and get you thinking about the future
- Provide you with a template that you can customize to send out

[Learn more and purchase your copy here.](#)

Virtual Event How-To Guide

When it comes time to promoting your teleseminar, webinar or other virtual event, do you know where to start? Are you not getting the registration numbers you want in your virtual events? Want to learn a proven method for increasing visibility and awareness for your next virtual event?



The Virtual Event Promotion Guide will help you get more registrations in your virtual events.

Erin Blaskie has run more than 150 successful virtual events. Her largest held just over 400 participants. She has delivered webinars, teleseminars and video training and has tried and tested the promotional methods to see which works the best.

In this guide, you will receive a concrete, step-by-step guide to help you promote your next virtual event to increase visibility and increase awareness.

[Learn more and purchase your copy here.](#)