

VIRTUAL TIDBITS

DOCU-TYPE - VIRTUAL ASSISTANCE, WEB DESIGN & HOSTING

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Editor's Notes:

Welcome to the first issue of Virtual TidBits for 2009. We hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and we sincerely wish you a healthy, happy and prosperous 2009! Make this YOUR year!

I don't know about you but I am not one for making New Year's Resolutions. For many people (including myself), following through on those resolutions is the hardest part of all. I don't feel like putting myself through those feelings of disappointment when I don't get "it" done so I just don't make them at all. :-)

However, when it comes to my business, I do make promises. Last year I promised to delegate some of the projects to others and I kept that promise... I have a handful of creative and professional contractors that I can now rely on. This year I promise to "try" be a little more organized. I can help clients with their organizational tasks but mine always seem to take a backseat so this year I hope to rectify that.

No matter if you make promises or not, we hope you have a successful year in both your business and other areas of your life. See you next time!



Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA

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How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business (book & ebook)

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What's New?

Update on the move... we're all done... well, almost all done. There are still a few boxes here and there but we are settled in and had a great Christmas in our new house.

Almost all of the decorating is done. We stripped wallpaper from almost every room; painted almost every room; laid a new floor in the kitchen (yes, I actually did the floor... a nice porcelain...looks great if I do say so myself. :-); and had new carpet put in several rooms. We still have to do the main floor bathroom and the spare bedroom but the rest of the

house is done.

Next comes the barn, which should be here within a couple of weeks, and putting up fencing for the paddocks (which we started this past weekend but the deep freeze we are in right now has made the ground undrillable so it will have to wait until warmer temperatures happen). We will then be able to bring home some horses.... can't wait!

Other than that, not much is new. Holiday season is not a time for



starting "new" projects or initiatives but I hope to have something new to report over the next few issues.

So, happy "new" year and may your year be filled with all kinds of new and exciting initiatives.

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100 articles relating to small business and over 500 links, resources and tips to help you run your business. We even include a list of each newsletter and what articles are in each issue so you can pick which issue you want to read when you want to read it. No more of the time consuming task of downloading each issue from our website. Find out more - www.docutype.net/news.htm

Spotlight - Backyard Brands

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- Easy to Understand & Implement Search Optimization Techniques
- **How to Respond to Requests for Proposals (our best seller)**
- 25 Cost Effective Marketing Strategies (Plus 10 Tips to Make Them Successful)
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Upcoming Ebooks:

Website Design for Mobile Devices, ...and more

How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business

(available in print - \$29.95 or pdf - \$19.95)

The perfect resource for anyone interested in starting or building their own VA practice.

It helps you every step of the way...

- ◆ from choosing the right name for your business...
- ◆ to determining your rates...
- ◆ to marketing your services...
- ◆ and even helps you when it comes time to expand your business...
- ◆ plus so much more!

200+ pages, this book takes critical information needed to turn your desire to start your own Virtual Assistant business into a profitable endeavor that are guaranteed to bring success... including:

- ◆ dozens of sample letters, contracts and other documents;
- ◆ an extensive list of helpful websites and software; and
- ◆ input from VAs in all stages of business ownership

The extensive information included comes to you from the founders of the Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection who have a passion for seeing the Virtual Assistant industry, and every individual VA, become a household name. Each is also the owner of a successful VA business that started with just one client who took a chance on them, and now they have clients all over the world.

Everything you need to know to start, run and expand your virtual assistant practice

<http://www.howtobuildavirtualassistantbusiness.com>

How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business

Everything you need to know to start, build and expand your Virtual Assistant practice.



A Little Bit of Fun - And that's how the fight started...

When I got home last night, my wife demanded that I take her someplace expensive....so, I took her to a gas station..... And that's how the fight started....

I tried to talk my wife into buying a case of Miller Light for \$14.95. Instead, she bought a jar of cold cream for \$7.95. I told her the beer would make her look better at night than the cold cream. And that's how the fight started....

After retiring, I went to the Social Security office to apply for Social Security. The woman behind the counter asked me for my driver's license to verify my age. I looked in my pockets and realized I had left my wallet at home. I told the woman that I was very sorry, but I would have to go home and come back later. The woman said, 'Unbutton your shirt'. So I opened my shirt revealing my curly silver hair. She said, 'That silver hair on your chest is proof enough for me' and she processed my Social Security application. When I got home, I excitedly told my wife about my experience at the Social Security office. She said, 'You should have dropped your pants. You might have gotten disability too!!' And that's how the fight started....

My wife and I were sitting at a table at my high school reunion, and I kept staring at a drunken lady swigging her drink as she sat alone at a nearby table. My wife asked, 'Do you know her?' 'Yes,' I sighed, 'She's my old girlfriend. I understand she took to drinking right after we split up those many years ago, and I hear she hasn't been sober since.' 'My God!' says my wife, 'Who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?' And that's how the fight started....

I rear-ended a car this morning. So there we were alongside the road and slowly the other driver got out of his car. You know how sometimes you just get soooo stressed and little things just seem funny? Yeah, well I couldn't believe it.... He was a DWARF!!! He stormed over to my car, looked up at me, and shouted, 'I AM NOT HAPPY!!!' So, I looked down at him and said, 'Well, then which one are you?' And that's how the fight started....

I took my wife to a restaurant. The waiter, for some reason, took my order first. 'I'll have the strip steak, medium rare, please.' He said, 'Aren't you worried about the mad cow?' 'Nah, she can order for herself.' And that's how the fight started....

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Dates to Remember (for January/February 2009)

January:

1st - New Year's Day
19th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day (US)
26th - Chinese New Year
26th - Australia Day



February:

2nd - Ground Hog Day
14th - Valentine's Day
16th - President's Day
25th - Ash Wednesday

(These dates come from a variety of online resources and are correct, to the best of my knowledge)

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Cool Links

How to Kill a Web Designer in Six Easy Steps - <http://www.communitymx.com/flicks/01132009.cfm>

Here's a great tip for those using Outlook 2007 with multiple email accounts and signatures. If you want to assign a signature to a particular email account, do the following:

Tools > Options > Mail Format > Signatures...

then under the "Choose default signature" section, pick the email account you want to work with in the first drop down menu and then choose the signature you want to use for Replies and New Messages. There is no save button for this part (which is what I was looking for all

along). You just choose each account and the corresponding signatures and it automatically saves them.

<http://office.microsoft.com/training/training.aspx?AssetID=RP101861831033&CTT=6&Origin=RP101861821033>

Generate Website Traffic With Postcards *by Bob Leduc*

Promoting your website is getting more difficult these days. New marketing tactics come and go fast. They work for a while then quickly fade away. Just keeping up with the changes can be a full time job.

Here's a proven way you can generate lots of traffic to your website ...one that hasn't faded away. In fact, it actually works better now than ever before - and you probably haven't even tried it.

What is it? Go offline and promote your website with postcards.

But, you say, "I'm an internet marketer, not a direct mail marketer." Right, and so are most of your competitors. That's why they don't market with postcards ...and why most of them are not likely to try postcards anytime soon.

You won't have much competition. Maybe that's one of the reasons why postcards work so well for internet marketers.

It Costs Less than You Think

The cost for printing postcards starts at just a few cents each, depending on how you print them. And you can send postcards by First Class Mail in the US for just 26 cents each if you keep them between 3 1/2 to 4 1/4 inches high and between 5 to 6 inches wide.

OK. So you're ready to give postcards a try. But where do you begin?

1. Start with the Mailing List

You'll get a good response to your postcards if you send them to prospects already interested in what you offer.

You'll get an even better response if those prospects also have a proven history of acting on offers they receive.

For example, get a list of prospects who previously requested information (or actually bought) something similar to what you sell - or a list of paid subscribers to a publication targeting the same interests that make them good prospects for what you sell.

You can get these and other similar lists from most mailing list brokers.

2. Don't Forget Why You're Mailing Postcards

The purpose of your postcards is to get the readers to visit your website (take an action). It's not to close a sale for money (make a purchase). Postcards are too small to be effective at closing sales. Closing sales is what your website is designed to do.

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Six Ways to Reduce Stress in Uncertain Economic Times *by Stan Popovich*

It is very tough to own and manage a business in today's uncertain economic times. Many businesses are going bankrupt and others are struggling just to survive. How can you, the business owner deal with the stresses and anxieties of managing a business? Here are six tips on what to do to help your business succeed and help to reduce your anxieties.

Take it one day at a time and try to focus on the present when running your business. Instead of worrying about how you will get through the rest of the week, try to focus on today. Each day can provide us with different opportunities to learn new things and that includes learning how to deal with your business problems. You never know when the answers you are looking for will come to your doorstep.

Budget your money properly and watch your expenses. It is important that you spend your money wisely so that your business will stay afloat. During these tough economic times, buy only those things that you absolutely need to make your business effective. You never know when you will be short on cash so develop a sound budget which will prepare you for the short and long term future of your business.

Continue to learn new and better ways to improve your business. No matter how long you have been running your business, there is always something to learn. Keep in touch with people in your field and try to read the current events that affect your business. It only takes one new concept to make a difference in your business.

If you find yourself struggling with your business, remember that no one can predict the future with one hundred percent certainty. Even if the thing that you feared does happen there are circumstances and factors that you can't predict which can be used to your advantage. For instance, let's say that you miss the deadline for a project you have been working on for the last few months. Everything you feared is coming true. Suddenly, the customer comes to your office and tells you that he extended the deadline for personal reasons and that he forgot to tell you the day before. This unknown factor changes everything. Remember that things change and that your present situation will get better if you are patient.

Get help from your local small business centers or join a business association around your area. They will be able to provide you with additional advice and insights on how to deal with your specific problems regarding your business. In addition, try to go to some seminars or take some classes to learn new things that might help you in the long run. Remember that it never hurts to ask for help.

There are ways to deal with your business and the anxieties that go with it. Remember that all you can do is to do your best each day, hope for the best, and take things in stride.

Stan Popovich is the author of "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear Using Psychology, Christianity and Non Resistant Methods" - an easy to read book that presents a general overview of techniques that are effective in managing persistent fears and anxieties. For additional information go to: <http://www.managingfear.com/>

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SEO is Not a Last-Ditch Effort *by Jill Whalen*

Sales are down for many businesses due to the slow economy. Business owners and CEOs are looking for that one thing that can pull them through the hard times and keep them afloat. When times get tough, many turn to SEO, hoping that it will be the ticket to increased sales. While SEO is almost always a good idea, if you're counting on it to save a failing business, you may want to rethink things.

The customers you receive from search engines should not be what your entire marketing plan consists of. SEO is a long-term strategy for increasing your targeted customer base. It's the gravy to the rest of your marketing initiatives. It's a way to reach those extra customers whom you wouldn't have been able to reach previously, but it should never be the meat and potatoes of your business.

Here's why:

SEO isn't a quick fix. If you didn't design your website with SEO in mind and you haven't given much thought to it, it's going to take time to plan your SEO strategy. It will take weeks to do the initial research required to even know where to begin. While there may be some low-hanging fruit you can grab quickly, without the necessary research, you wouldn't even know where to find it.

SEO isn't something you can just turn on. It would be great if we could just flick a switch and suddenly your website would be optimized and receiving highly targeted search engine traffic. But, unfortunately, it just doesn't work that way. Site architecture needs to be redefined, anchor text links need to be rewritten, Titles and Meta descriptions need to be created, and page copy generally needs a complete overhaul. Even paid search can't be turned on with the flick of a switch – keywords need to be defined, landing pages created, campaigns need to be set up, etc.

SEO needs time to age. After your website has been put into perfect SEO shape (after many months of hard work), it will start to receive more targeted search engine traffic. But even that is a slow process. Traffic will increase incrementally, and get better over time as the on-page SEO work begins to mature.

SEO needs link popularity. On-page SEO is only half of the battle for more search engine visitors. The success of your

SEO depends on the overall link popularity of the website. If the site has been around a long time and has already built up a lot of links, that will certainly help things go faster. However, most sites will need some additional work in this area. Even with great overall link popularity, the links may not be targeting anchor text that correlates with the on-page SEO work.

SEO needs to be done in conjunction with other marketing. While SEO is a relatively inexpensive form of marketing, it shouldn't be the only thing you do to gain business. SEO is very volatile and the search engines can change their formula or drop your website on a dime. You should never count on the visitors you receive from organic search to always be there. Use it to supplement your other marketing, but always be aware that what Google giveth they can also taketh away. It's a good idea to perform other online marketing campaigns such as paid search, email marketing, blogging, social media marketing, etc., but also offline marketing such as direct mail, print advertising, radio spots, etc.

There's a lot that goes into a successful SEO campaign; when done correctly it's a worthwhile, long-term investment for nearly any business with a website. Just make sure to build it into your marketing plan from the get-go and not make it an afterthought. While I have seen SEO save some companies' businesses, more often than not I've seen it be too little too late.

If your business is doing fairly well without SEO, that's the best time to get into it and start collecting that extra targeted traffic!

Visit Jill Whalen's website/blog at <http://www.highrankings.com>

"Learn to enjoy every minute of your life. Be happy now. Don't wait for something outside of yourself to make you happy in the future. Think how really precious is the time you have to spend, whether it's at work or with your family. Every minute should be enjoyed and savoured."

Earl Nightingale

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Generate Website Traffic with Postcards *(cont'd)*

3. Decide What to Say on Your Postcard

You don't need to come up with a strategy to persuade people to read your postcard. It will be delivered with the message exposed and ready to read. So get right to the point.

Don't focus on your product or service. Instead, spotlight the major benefits your product or service provides. That will arouse the reader's interest and motivate them to find out more about those benefits ...by going to your website.

Tip: Offer a bonus to those who visit your site before a specific deadline. It will boost the response.

That's it. Just 3 simple steps. Try it. You'll discover a profitable way to generate lots of website traffic - one you can use for many years to come.

Bob Leduc spent 20 years helping businesses like yours find new customers and increase sales. He just released a New Edition of his manual, *How To Build Your Small Business Fast With Simple Postcards ...and launched *BizTips from Bob**, a newsletter to help small businesses grow and prosper. You'll find his low-cost marketing methods at: <http://BobLeduc.com> or call: 702-658-1707 After 10 AM Pacific Time/Las Vegas, NV

Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection

The Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection (CVAC) is Canada's foremost organization uniting Canadian Virtual Assistants and the world. We provide a venue for VAs to network, share knowledge and skills, plan events and obtain valuable support from other VAs in various stages of business development.

The mission of CVAC is to connect VAs and clients globally. Canadian VAs possess among them the high standards of education, experience and professionalism required to provide exemplary business support services. Through a solid knowledge base, a growing network, and exchange of innovative ideas, Canadian VAs are making their mark on a growing profession.

CVAC is by Canadian VAs for Canadian VAs. Members

of CVAC are in a variety of stages of running their Virtual Assistance businesses in Canada. Some have just started while others have been at it for some time. By being in these different stages, we can share the do's and don'ts of running your business. Veteran VAs have "been there and done that" so they can enlighten others as to what works and what doesn't. New VAs have a fresh perspective and bring new ideas to the group.

Whether you are already established in the VA industry, just opened your virtual business, or are in the research process of setting up your own VA practice and are seeking guidance, CVAC is for you!

<http://www.cvac.ca>

We want to hear from you!

Now I would like to ask for more feedback and details. What do you like about the newsletter and what would like

to see changed? Are the fonts good? Do the articles meet your needs? Does the newsletter, on a whole, help you and your

business? What would you like to see more of? Etc. Send your comments to TidBits_Feedback@docutype.net

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