

## **Virtual assistants sign of changing times**

They say the only thing a virtual assistant can't do for your business is come in and make the coffee.

Cindy Greenway and Gordon Folka are "VAs" who handle tasks an executive assistant or administrative assistant would do on the spot.

But technology and corporate downsizing have eliminated many of those flesh-and-blood jobs, creating opportunities for the virtual kind of assistant.

Greenway says most of her clients are outside Victoria — Kirkland, Wash., Minnesota and Calgary — and she's never actually met them.

Their ideal clients are self-employed business people who need someone to handle the administrative side, say an executive coach or motivational speaker, a lawyer or real estate agent. Small business owners may need help, but lack enough work for even a part-time paid employee.

Web site design and maintenance is a big part of what virtual assistants do, says Folka, whose background is writing bookkeeping software and now specializes in database management.

The two aim to start a local chapter of the year-old Canadian Virtual Assistants Association and are looking for other VAs who want to trade expertise. It's also a support group. Membership is \$30 a year. Phone 598-6267 or see [www.cvaa.ca](http://www.cvaa.ca). — *Norman Gidney*