



Editor's Note

Caroline Jarzabek

CMJ Virtual Office Manager

Congratulations to Janice and Elayne on their new book, I had an opportunity to view it at the FoVA convention and it is truly awesome and full of great advice for new and seasoned VAs. Check out an excerpt on Page 7.

I've had the pleasure of working with Della, Teresa and Zana in getting the Webinars back up and running and I thank them for their patience and hard work.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter, happy reading.

Warmly,
Caroline. ❖

Founders' Note

Elayne Whitfield, CCVA, MVA, PREVA
Executive Assistance

Janice Byer, CCVA, MVA
Docu-Type Administrative and Web Design Services

For over 5 years, we have been happy to help VAs get a head start on owning and operating a VA business. Managing CVAC has been challenging at times but our goal was always to offer a place for Canadian VAs to learn and share with each other in an effort to grow their businesses.

We are happy to announce the rebirth of the Webinars for our members. You can read more about it on page 3.

And we are even more excited to now offer a book to help you grow your business. "How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business" has been in the works for several years and we have finally made it come to life. You can a brief intro on Page 7 or visit www.howtobuildavirtualassistantbusiness.com. This book is for everyone who is interested in starting and building a VA practice with a special chapter on how to register your business in Canada.

We hope everyone had a wonderful summer and that you all got a chance take a little time for yourselves.

Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA
Elayne Whitfield-Parr, CCVA, MVA
Founders' of CVAC - www.cvac.ca
Connecting Canadian VAs with the world... virtually! ❖

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IPBC, Where Experience Counts
Submitted by: Karen Bowman
West Coast Way Consulting

Canada's newest non profit professional association, the Institute of Professional Bookkeepers of Canada (IPBC) is forging new ground in the certification of bookkeepers across the country. Unlike other certification processes, IPBC's innovative approach to certification is not limited to having designated courses in bookkeeping as a requirement to participate in the testing process.

Gordon Skillen, Executive Director of IPBC, says, "The founding philosophy of IPBC is based on the fact there are many practicing bookkeepers that have been working five to 25 years with invaluable practical experience. IPBC feels this has merit to the level of their competency and should be considered as part of the qualifying process to obtaining a CPB Certified Professional Bookkeeper designation." In consideration of the many skilled bookkeepers in Canada IPBC developed an open membership application giving value towards practical work experience and educational training. Following membership acceptance, verification of a minimum two years bookkeeping work qualifies members the opportunity to then take the national CPB Certified Professional Bookkeeper exam. Once successfully passed with a minimum 75% grade, bookkeepers can proudly display their CPB Certified Professional Bookkeeper credentials alongside their IPBC membership logo. They are also included in IPBC's Member Directory of CPB Certified Professional Bookkeepers. This directory allows potential clients to seek out bookkeepers and confirm their CPB status.

In accordance with upholding a level of professional standing, IPBC requires a minimum amount of continuing education hours yearly to maintain the CPB designation. This further demonstrates the quality of knowledgeable bookkeepers the general public can expect from IPBC CPB Certified Professional Bookkeeper members.

IPBC's continued growth extends professional and educational benefits to its membership by partnering with of some the best known industry leaders within the bookkeeping and accounting professions.

Skillen explained the rapid growth of IPBC is based on the overwhelming response to the value it places on the practical work experience demonstrated by many of its members. Skillen states, "For people who have already proven themselves as bookkeepers IPBC is the association to belong to as it is where experience counts for Canada's bookkeeping profession."

www.ipbc.ca ❖

A Warm Welcome to our new CVAC Full Members:

- Della Bercovitch
- Raj K. Bhullar
- Joanne Birce
- Jennifer Boxall
- Lisa Britton
- A. Buchanan
- Wendy Burge
- S. Carcasole
- Anita Carmichael
- Nicole Charette
- Kathy Colaiacovo
- Carol Cunliffe
- Diane Daly
- Dagmar deRijke
- Coral Deacon
- Mary Dunn
- Chris Edgar
- Carol Eigner
- Patti Fearon
- G. Figueiredo
- R. Fleischacke
- Nancy Frazer
- Susan Frizzell
- Zana Gordon
- G. Gunthardt
- P. Harber-Murphy
- Jennifer Hazen
- G. Howell-Mercer
- Cynthia Howlett
- Ken Hutzol
- Denise Jeffrey
- Peggy Jenner
- V. Johnson
- Pam Johnson
- Francie Kane
- Cheryl Kennedy
- Tammy King
- Anita Klassen
- Jane Klementti
- S. LeLacheur
- V. Lindsay
- Christi Litavski
- L.A. Lowrie
- Rose Mastracci
- J. Matheson
- S. McBeath
- Linda McCarthy
- Laurie Meyer
- Loretta Nelson
- L. O'Doherty
- Laura Orr
- D. Quackenbush
- Deborah Redfern
- Shelia Reithmayer
- Ariel Ross
- Stephanie Shier
- Shelley Sturgeon
- Jean Tapley
- Stacey Taylor
- Tanya Theroux
- K. Thomas
- R. Thompson
- Annette Walker
- Frances Watt
- Melissa Wolski

Welcome to all of the new partial members ❖

RPSAV For French VAs Has Launched
Submitted by: **Danielle Guérin**

*The Virtual Assistance community is expanding and a new VA Network was born on May 16th 2008, our International VA Day, the **RPSAV**.*

***RPSAV** stands for **Réseau des professionnelles en soutien administratif virtuel** and it is the first French VA Network.*

This network was founded by Danielle Guérin, a Virtual Assistant since 2002, its mission is to promote the profession while providing its members with different tools and resources all geared to encourage collaboration and increase the individual businesses that are members.

Danielle is a member of many VA networks (CVAC being one of them) and was motivated to create the RPSAV because Danielle knows the benefits of being part of a community and wanted to offer the same opportunity to her French colleagues.

The RPSAV offers a VA directory, an RFP form, a Forum and will be hosting the First annual French VA Conference in October 2008.

*Learn more about **RPSAV**, a nurturing association for French VAs.*

For more information or to contact Danielle:

*Danielle Guérin
Young Self-Employed Worker of Québec – ARISTA 2008
Provincial Competitions*

*VADG
Virtual Assistant*

*Virtual Efficiency - Striving for Excellence... Always!
www.votreadjointe.com/blog*

*Founder and Director of RPSAV
Réseau des professionnelles en soutien administratif
virtuel
www.rpsavcom*

*Creator of the Global Manager
The planner to help you manage your time and your
personal life
www.adjointedexcellence.com/globalm.html*

*danielle@votradjointe.com
Tel. : 819-568-2333 / 1 877 335-3483
Fax. : 819-568-2333 ❖*

Webinar Announcement
Submitted by: Della Bercovitch

CVAC is proud to announce a series of free Webinars being offered to its members.

Committee members have been hard at work assembling a lineup of fabulous speakers/presenters for you to enjoy and learn from.

Our speaker lineup will include:

- **Sheri Andrunyk**, Women for Women, presenting on Marketing
- **Sharon Alderson**, Investors Group, speaking on Money and Personality Types
- **Amber Miller's** Webinar will feature Shopping Cart Training
- **Yvonne Weld**, Able Virtual Assistant Services, speaking on Creating a Thriving Business
- **Heather Antoine**, Cluster Internet Marketing, presenting on Top Ten Search Engine Techniques
- **Karen Dorland**, Image Connections, presenting on Dressing for Success.
- **And more speakers to confirm.**

Advanced registration will be required. An email invitation will be posted with the particulars of the Webinar. Attendees will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Seating is limited you will need to respond quickly.

If you have any suggestions or a special interest that you would like to see presented, please contact one of the committee members:

Della Bercovitch, Committee Co-chair
Della-gate,
della@della-gate.com

Teresa Power, Committee Co-Chair
Claritypoint Virtual Assistance
tpower67@sympatico.ca

Zana Gordon
ZJG Consulting Group Inc.
zgordon@zjqconsultinggroup.com

Caroline Jarzabek
CMJ Virtual Office Manager
caroline@clickawayva.com

Thank you to the committee for all their hard work at putting together the webinars and the great line up of speakers. ❖



JOIN CVAC

BECOME A MEMBER

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!

Read more about the benefits of joining CVAC at <http://www.cvac.ca/member.php> ❖

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Newmarket Lunch

1st Wednesday of every month

The Buttery – North East Corner of Davis Drive and Yonge Street.

17565 Yonge Street, Newmarket – 905-836-0300
12:00 p.m. Noon.

GTA VA Breakfast

3rd Saturday of every month

Perkins Family Restaurant (Holiday Inn)
Dixon and Martingrove

600 Dixon Road – 416-240-9741

Durham CVAC Luncheon

4th Thursday of every month

Kelsey's – Brock Road and 401
In Pickering.

Please let us know of any events in your area ❖

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Remember that your membership with CVAC has a yearly renewal. If you are unsure of your renewal date, please contact founders@cvac.ca. You can renew your membership at <http://www.cvac.ca/renewal.php>

We will send out several reminders and if we fail to get a response, our system will eliminate your email address from the full member's announcement list (where the RFPs are sent), disable your password for the member's only area of the website, and delete your contact information from the member directory.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP! ❖

Motivational Quotes

"Happiness is found in doing. Not merely in possessing."

Napoleon Hill – Think and Grow Rich

"Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by action alone."

*Thomas Carlyle - 1795-1881,
Philosopher and Author*

"Be careful the environment you choose for it will shape you; be careful the friends you choose for you will become like them."

*W. Clement Stone - 1902-2002,
Author and Businessman*

"If criticism is mistaken or mean-spirited, rise above it. Maintain the high ground when you're under fire. No victory is worth winning at the expense of picking up the mud that has been slung at you and throwing it back."

*Rubel Shelly
Preacher, Educator and Author*

"It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome."

*William James
1842-1910, Psychologist, Professor and Author* ❖

CVAC SHOP – Support CVAC and the VA industry with these cool, high-quality products sporting the CVAC logo. You will be amazed how many people will ask you, “What is the Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection?”, or “What is a Virtual Assistant?” and then you can tell them the benefits of working with a VA, such as yourself.

Visit <http://www.cafepress.com/cvacshop> to get your t-shirt, hat, mousepad and more! ❖

CVAC is proud to have acquired special rates for benefit plans for our members. As a full member of CVAC, you can now get health insurance and more at wonderful rates for full members at <http://www.cvac.ca> and go to the full members’ page. ❖

Don’t want the expense of a fax machine? CVAC and MyFax have teamed up to offer an Email-based fax service for our members. Click here for more information <http://www.myfax.com/affiliates/index.asp?aff=4860&bid=3> ❖

CVAC now has an exclusive arrangement with I'm InTouch to offer their remote access solution to our members at a discounted price and extended length of usage. Read more and download your 30-day trial version at <http://www.cvac.ca/imintouch.php> ❖

CVAC Mentoring Program - The CVAC Mentoring Program is a full-member benefit and it is meant to assist both newcomers and existing VA’s in their search for sustainable self-employment, by matching them with mentors who have greater professional experience. If you would like to be matched up with a mentor or can offer your help as a mentor, please visit <http://www.cvac.ca/mentoring.php> ❖

For more exciting benefits, offers and E-books go to the full members’ page at <http://www.cvac.ca>.

Not a full member yet? Why not join now and take advantage of all these exciting benefits! ❖

A Little Humour

Adam was hanging around the Garden of Eden feeling very lonely. So, God asked him, "What's wrong with you?" Adam said he didn't have anyone to talk to.

God said that He was going to make Adam a companion and that it would be a woman. He said, "This petty lady will gather food for you, she will cook for you, and when you discover clothing, she will wash it for you. She will always agree with every decision you make and she will not nag you, and will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement. She will praise you!

She will bear your children. and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them.

"She will NEVER have a headache and will freely give you love and passion whenever you need it."

Adam asked God, "What will a woman like this cost?"

God replied, "An arm and a leg."
Then Adam asked, "What can I get for a rib?"

Of course the rest is history.....

And the moral to the STORY is: Men shouldn't be so CHEAP with their Women... ❖

WEBINARS

The Webinar committee has been formed and is now actively putting together an exciting lineup of talented speakers, to motivate and inform CVAC Members.

If you are interested in being a speaker, or have any suggestions, please contact Della - della@della-gate.com ❖

CVAC Is Looking For Your Feedback

- **What is the CVAC Website missing?**
- **What types of resources would you like to see on the website to help you build your business?**
- **Any other comments or feedback?**

Please e-mail founders@CVAC.ca with your ideas and comments. ❖

An Inspirational Story - Two Horses

Author - unknown

Just up the road from my home is a field, with two horses in it.



From a distance, each horse looks like any other horse. But if you stop your car, or are walking by, you will notice something quite amazing....

Looking into the eyes of one horse will disclose that he is blind. His owner has chosen not to have him put down, but has made a good home for him.

This alone is amazing.



If you stand nearby and listen, you will hear the sound of a bell.

Looking around for the source of the sound, you will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field.

Attached to the horse's halter is a small bell.

It lets the blind friend know where the other horse is, so he can follow.



As you stand and watch these two friends, you'll see that the horse with the bell is always checking on the blind horse, and that the blind horse will listen for the bell and then slowly walk to where the other horse is, trusting that he will not be led astray.

When the horse with the bell returns to the shelter of the barn each evening, it stops occasionally and looks back, making sure that the blind friend isn't too far behind to hear the bell...



Like the owners of these two horses, God does not throw us away just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges.

He watches over us and even brings others into our lives to help us when we are in need.

Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by the little ringing bell of those who God places in our lives.

Other times we are the guide horse, helping others to find their way.... ❖

Advertise on CVAC

If you are looking to subcontract to other VAs, what better way to reach them than to advertise on CVAC. Or place an ad on our member directory page or our RFP page to reach all of those potential clients looking for a VA.

For as little as \$25.00/month you can place your banner on our website where your fellow VAs can find you when they're looking for some extra help.

If you'd prefer to advertise in our newsletter, the cost is only \$10.00 per issue for a small banner. We'll even design the banner for you if necessary.

For more information please go to:

www.cvac.ca/advertise.php. ❖

How To Build A Virtual Assistant Business *Janice Byer and Elayne Whitfield-Parr*

Although the term "Virtual Assistant" is still very new to the business community, there are thousands of home-based administrative workers around the world who now refer to themselves as VAs. The opportunities for the professional services offered by these VAs are endless.

So, how exactly do you start and build a Virtual Assistant practice, let alone expand it to a level where other VAs are working with you? The first thing you need to do is determine if you have those necessary skills. **Having a computer does not make you a VA.** You really need to have some real-life experience doing the tasks that are generally expected of VAs. If you have a background in the administrative field or a history of providing other VA-related services, you are well on your way to having what it takes to build a successful Virtual Assistant practice.

You also need to ensure that you **have the passion and commitment** to make your business successful. "If you build it, they will come," does not work in the real world of building a small business. You also need to learn how to actually run a small business so the following are just some ideas for starting your Virtual Assistant business.

One of the first steps you will take will be **deciding on a name for your business.** Many VAs have 'Virtual Assistant or Assistance' in their business names. This definitely helps others to determine what you do (well... if they know what a VA is and does) much more than if you pull some name out of a hat and use it just because you like it. Make your business name meaningful, easy to pronounce and understand, and easily adaptable should you decide to change the focus of your business.

Once you have decided on your business name, it is time to **register** it. Every province and state in every country has different procedures that they require you to follow so your best bet is to contact your local small business enterprise centre or local government office and they will help you with everything that needs to be done.

Next step... your business plan. **You don't necessarily need to write out a formal business plan, although you do need to plan your business. Planning your business is 100% thinking, analyzing, investigating, choosing and decision-making.**

Some benefits of producing a business plan include:

- the process of preparing a business plan will force you to think about your business, research some options, recognize opportunities and risks, and test some of your assumptions;
- a business plan will help you identify the cash needs of your business;
- a business plan can be used to raise funds from banks and investors;
- a business plan provides a benchmark against which to compare the progress and performance of your business.

It is a good idea for all businesses to prepare and regularly update their business plans.

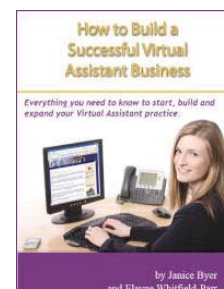
Once you have made the decision to start your Virtual Assistant business and have made a plan of action, it is time to **set up your office.** Your office equipment is extremely important to the success of your business. You need to have the most current software to provide the best services as well as an up-to-date and reliable computer system. Other peripherals that you will need could include a multi-line phone system with an answering machine and a printer that allows you to scan and perhaps even fax. You may also need to get other dedicated equipment depending on the services that you will offer.

Once your office is set up and you have determined what services you will be offering, it is time to think about how **you will market your business and who you will target your marketing to.** Your first step will be to develop your business cards and other marketing pieces. You may want to have a brochure ready to hand out at networking events and possibly provide in a direct email campaign. Other means of getting the word out about your business should include a website and you can also write articles for distribution both online and in print publications as well as offer an online newsletter which can help you have a form of keeping in touch with your clients and contacts.

Owning and operating your own Virtual Assistant business can be very rewarding but does require a lot of work. However, if you are passionate about making your business a success, the entire journey will be a labour of love.

This article is just a taste of How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business. You may also need help with determining your rates; getting clients; training and certifications; moving your business; and even expanding your business. The new book of the same name as this article, written by Janice Byer & Elayne Whitfield-Parr, has over 200 pages of information to help you with these and other challenges that you may face during all aspects of running your business. Visit <http://www.howtobuildavirtualassistantbusiness.com> for more information and to order your copy.

Janice Byer and Elayne Whitfield-Parr, co-authors of How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business (www.howtobuildavirtualassistantbusiness.com), are the co-founders of the Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection (www.cvac.ca). They also own and operate their own busy individual VA practices but have dedicated a tremendous amount of their careers to helping other Virtual Assistants around the world to start, build and expand their own businesses and enjoy the satisfaction of being a part of such a wonderful industry. ❖



VA QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME



Q. Should I get my subcontractors to sign agreements before they work with/for me?

A. Absolutely! This protects you, your clients, and the subcontractors. A well written subcontractor agreement will clearly outline your expectations, requirements, and terms and allows the subcontractor to fully understand the deliverables. A combination of the subcontractor agreement and a non-competition agreement should cover all aspects of bringing on board a new subcontractor. A contract also clearly establishes that your subcontractor is not an employee, which is important when it comes to justifying not paying source deductions to the government. CVAC has some great templates available under the Members Only link, sub menu item Templates:

<http://www.cvac.ca/members/index.php?accesscheck=%2Fmembers%2Ftemplates.php>

Q. I'm having trouble deciding what to charge for my services. Any advice?

A. Again, CVAC's amazing resources to the rescue. Check out Resources, Price Your Services to get the low down on how to approach this tricky subject: <http://www.cvac.ca/templates/Price%20your%20service.pdf>. On a personal level, you need to determine what your time is worth and how you want your services to be perceived by potential clients. Although a January 14, 2008 Associated Press article by Randolph E. Schmid was referencing wine, the same may be applied to other services. He says, "Want people to like your product more? Raise the price. That seems to be the lesson from a new study in which people were asked to taste wines marked with different prices. Researchers scanned the brains of the testers and found that the part of the brain that records pleasure lit up more for the more pricey vintages." This interesting article goes on to explain the connection between the expectation of how good something is in relation to the price attached. Perhaps, like fine wine, quality VA's also improve and raise their prices with age or in our case, experience. At a recent marketing seminar, an interesting suggestion was put forward to choose a rate that makes your toes curl and then present it with confidence and certainty that you are worth it!

Most people tend to undervalue themselves and miss out on the opportunity to ask for what they're really worth.

Q. How do I advertise my business when I have little money to spend on marketing?

A. It doesn't take a lot of money to create an effective marketing campaign. Marketing is really about developing great relationships and trust with people. Setting systems in place that enhance client experience with you and your business is a simple and cost effective way to market. Investing in thank you notes for referrals, small tokens of appreciation for clients and specialty items for holidays or special events a client may have like birthdays and anniversaries can garner great returns in your business. Treat your clients like good friends and they will return the favour through word of mouth in referrals.

Q. How do I marketing my services when I don't like to talk about myself?

A. Stop selling, start telling! The main reason business owners don't like marketing is because they do not want to come across as a pushy salesman. Try this marketing turn around approach, start telling people what you can do for them. Let them know why you are passionate about helping your ideal client, small business or professional. Sharing why you care so much for your clients' needs demonstrates you have your clients' best interest in mind. People relate to people not sales pitches.

Q. Are there other ways of demonstrating my knowledge and services without trading my time with free consultations?

A. While anything *Free* is always good it can be challenge to give away Free time as a small business owner. Instead give away free reports, free tips or free articles on topics that your business frequently encounters. Don't like the word *Free* for your business? Use the word *Complimentary* on your website. By providing good content on relevant topics you can pre-qualify people as good clients. After reading information your business provides they will now have a sense of how you work and if you are the right choice for them. They will come to you ready to work with your business without you having to spend an hour of your valuable time convincing them why they should hire you.

Question and Answer time is brought to you by:
Karen Bowman, [West Coast Way Consulting &](#)
Wendy Burge, www.radiatedgeconsulting.com ❖

Subscribe or Unsubscribe Info:

The Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection is proud to offer the CVAC Newsletter to our members and all entrepreneurs around the world. We offer articles, links and tips to help you run your small business. If you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe to the CVAC Newsletter, please fill in the form at: <http://www.cvac.ca/newsletter.php> Full and Partial Members are automatically subscribed.