

10 Sure-fire Steps to Market Your VA Business

**Marketing Your
Virtual Assistant
Business**

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10 Sure-Fire Steps to Make More Money From Your Home Business

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At last!

A simple step process for marketing your home business!

If you've been trying to get your home business off the ground, don't despair, many others have been there before you and have successfully built their businesses.

If you apply some or all of these steps to your own business, work will follow, and along with it the satisfaction of knowing you have achieved what you set out to do!

Sometimes the simplest ideas will work when often we are looking for something more complicated because we think it can't be that simple!

The practical tips herein and the ideas you'll generate of your own accord after reading these pages will help you time and again!

Of course, that means you **DO** have to put some work in—but let this book bring the ideas out and get you motivated to move forward.

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Step 1

Determine Your Image

Are you going to use a business name or your own name to operate?

You need to know who to promote to and what you're going to promote before you can start doing that. Think about the following things and then start your research:

- Do you need an image or logo?
- Are you going to have corporate colours that are recognizable for your business?
- Are you going to use your home number or get a number specifically for your business?
- Will you be using a postal address or your own address?



My original logo in 1994 and updated 2013.

Step 2

Determine Your Services

Do you know what services you are going to provide?

- There is nothing worse than someone *umming* and *ahhing* on the other end of the phone when asked what they can do and how much it will cost. Determine these first before promoting your business—start off small and build on the services as you develop your skills and confidence. Most of the following suit Virtual Assistants and you may have other things you would like to try.

- *Audio Transcription*
- *Blog maintenance*
- *Bookkeeping*



- *Copywriter*
- *Data Entry*
- *Databases*
- *Desktop Publishing*
- *Digital Transcription*
- *Editing and proofreading*
- *Graphic Design/Illustrations*
- *Internet Research*
- *Newsletters/CRM support*
- *Proof reader/Editor*
- *Resume writing*
- *Social media support*
- *Troubleshooting (computer, software, etc)*
- *Website design and maintenance*
- *Word-processing*

Step 3

Business Cards and Signature Block

These go hand-in-hand. Business cards to give out wherever you go *physically*, and a signature block for wherever your emails go *virtually*. Always let people know who you are and what you do with the use of your signature block and business card.

Does your business name reflect what you do? If not, perhaps you need to work on a catch phrase too.

Two good books for you to get are *‘It’s in the Cards!’* and *‘Seven Second Marketing’*, both by Ivan Misner. A search on Google or at <http://www.bni.com> will reveal these books to you—both are worthwhile *investments for your business.

**Note any investments for your business are tax deductible—check with your Accountant for details.*

Step 4

Get your own domain name

There are many domain sales points online where you can get domain names quite cheaply.

<http://domains.acs-webhosting.com> might be a good place to start.

There really is no excuse for not having your own domain. And people tend to take your online business more seriously if you're not using a free email address account, or even just your ISP's email account. Get a domain and use it.

janesmith@whoswho.com?

tomjones@singing.com?

you@xxxxx.com?

Step 5

Research the networks

Networking is important both online and offline—locally and virtually. Not all your business will come from the one source and so it's important to look at *all* the possibilities for you out there.

1. First, look at **local business networks** through councils, communities, chambers of commerce, churches, schools, sports, Rotary, Lions, SWAP, BNI, Leads Club, and so on.
2. **Industry associations** are another source to investigate—if you have a niche specialty then joining the professional association connected with that niche is a sure way of gaining clients in that area, e.g. professional speakers, business coaches and medical practitioners.
3. Look at **online networks**—some are membership-based associations where you learn, network, discuss and share ideas, as well as

securing work. Others are there for discussion only, but also provide opportunities to get to know others in your field and secure work when someone needs help. Participation is the key to getting to know others, and for them to get to know and trust you, so they know they can come to you for assistance with a job.

www.yahogroups.com, www.facebook.com and www.linkedin.com are three great resources to start with.

4. Don't forget that **product launches** will provide another opportunity to network—especially if it's a product you're very familiar with as most of the audience will be there to learn more.

*Always make sure you have your
business cards with you.*



Step 6

Traditional Advertising

- Look at the Yellow Pages in your locality, state or territory—a small advert might be all that is needed to get things started and help you develop a presence. You will not get calls every day but the clients you do gain may stay with you for years and cover the cost of future advertising through the same medium.
- If you are considering advertising in a local paper, then give it a timeframe to see if it's working. Once only rarely works, although you might pick up someone if you're lucky. But having your advert listed weekly for a period of 6-8 weeks will often generate some interest. However, be prepared to stop and try something else if it's not working over your planned period of advertising. Seasons might be worth considering also.

- Join up with other local businesses and consider printing a calendar, newsletter, flyer or similar—share the cost for printing and distribution and make it work for all of you.

Step 7

Other Advertising

What local communities in your area produce regular newsletters, and often by volunteers who do not have the skills, knowledge, experience and/or the time to produce a quality newsletter? If you have that ability, you could offer to do their newsletter for them.

Consider that if you offered to do it free (a sponsorship), as a community service, it might only take 2-3 hours of your time per month. These newsletters are usually sponsored so you won't have to cover the cost of printing, or even distribution as volunteers generally deliver these. What a great way to get further exposure for your business!

Step 8

Testimonials

Don't overlook people for whom you've already done things. A testimonial goes a long way to verifying your credibility and if the person giving the testimonial has a business of their own, it helps promote them as well.

Testimonials look good on your website, in your newsletters, and your portfolio.

"Kathie has provided secretarial services of outstanding quality. She is trustworthy, punctual, friendly and dedicated to building the business of her clients. I would recommend her highly to anyone seeking a high standard of service and seamless assistance."

Paddy Spruce, Australia, first hired Kathie as a Virtual secretary and PA in 2003



"Kathie is extremely competent, resourceful and efficient. I consider her to be my first option if I need to outsource secretarial work."

Stuart Campbell, Campbell Management Systems Pty Ltd. Stuart is Kathie's business coach

"It's been a pleasure being a member of Kathie's ACS Network for nearly 10 years now. She is a great inspiration to myself and all members of the VA network in Australia and internationally. As members we rely on her for support and professional advice in helping us grow our VA business. I wish her continued success in the future."

Mary Jordon, Owner, Xpress Online Secretarial Services works with Kathie at "A Clayton's Secretary"

"I would recommend Kathie to ANYONE for various reasons. Kathie is an encourager, a strong support to Women in business and her indepth knowledge of the Virtual Assistant industry is impressive! She is very professional and has the experience to what is required to get the job done. I believe because of Kathie's integrity and character, it is no wonder she is sought out as a Top Notch VA today!"

Regina Baker, Executive Producer, USA
ChristianBusinessTalkRadio.com



Step 9

Develop a website

This doesn't have to be flash, whiz-bang, but neat, professional looking and to the point. It doesn't have to be lots of pages, just a couple is sufficient to outline your services and give your contact details, so people *can* contact you. There are many free programs available online, free website templates that can be utilized or low-cost services you can engage to get a website developed. Wordpress and Blogger also provide possibilities for low cost websites hosted with your own domain name.

Once you have your site then make sure you add a description and keywords (www.scrubtheweb.com/abs/builder.html) and then submit to search engines so people can find you.

The following will get you started:

<http://www.addme.com>

<http://www.submitexpress.com/submit.html>

If you're running a virtual business then a virtual presence is most important. Whilst it is true that a lot of people still use the printed Yellow Pages many are now of the practice of seeking support online.

Most important you include a phone number, a suburb/state/country and a contact form. Some would prefer to ring you but they need to know if the call is local or long distance. Make sure your phone number shows on every page, and a way to email you too.

Don't miss this audience!

Step 10

Write Articles

If you enjoy writing, and have good writing skills, then seek online and printed publications to which you can contribute articles on a regular basis.

There's nothing like being in print for those who enjoy writing and there is always a ready audience for your particular subject.

Hard sell is not the way to go, but rather demonstrating your expertise, knowledge, or skill in relation to the topic is what is best.

There are many sites available to submit your articles for use by ezine publishers or elsewhere. Also on discussion groups and other forums. Have a look at:

www.goarticles.com

www.articlecity.com

for a good start to your article submissions.

BONUS - Step 11

Measure your marketing

Ask people where they found out about you. It is important to know what is working, and what isn't. Be realistic about timeframes.

- An advertisement in the Yellow Pages is available for a whole year and it might take a few months before your first contact, because people are still using the old copy. However the copy you are in will remain used by many for a good two years or more.
- Weekly advertising in a local paper might take some weeks before your first contact—because people didn't have a need for the first couple of weeks and papers get thrown out.

- On the web if your site is not listed with search engines, no-one will find you so it's important to use search engine submissions to get it listed, but always make sure your web address is on ALL your printed materials, in your signature block and anywhere else you can think of—even your Yellow Pages advertising.
- Make sure the page title of your site does not say 'Home' but rather your business name, and a short description or location.
- Don't overlook business/VA directories on the web. And council directories too. These are already well placed with search engines and provide another avenue for listings.

The Final Word

Keep in touch with people and contribute when you can. You may be the most senior and experienced person on a particular forum but if you don't contribute, join in or answer questions, no-one is going to know.

BNI has a philosophy of '*Givers Gain*' and it is true that those who give of themselves will often receive back many times over. So don't be afraid to offer assistance and help when you can—without over-committing yourself to voluntary work. Strike a happy medium and over time you will develop the reputation you deserve for your business.

About the Author

Kathie M. Thomas is mother of 5 daughters, three natural, two step- and wife of Graham. Borne out of a need to be home with her young family, at that time ranging from the ages of 7 to 13, Kathie sought for a way to work from home. The year was 1994....

Recipient of multiple awards for secretarial and office services since 1993, Kathie not only runs a virtual assistant business and heads a global network of Virtual Assistants, but is also a professional speaker and trainer. Her message encourages all small business owner/operators to venture out and try new technologies, embrace the Internet and how to use it to promote their businesses.

Inside you will find practical tips on marketing your virtual service business. We wish you well in your business endeavors and welcome your comments and enquiries via email, mail, phone or fax.

Other books by Kathie M. Thomas:

- ❑ *The Home-Grown Secretary (2001)*
- ❑ *How To Become A Virtual Assistant (2004)*
- ❑ *Worth More Than Rubies: The Value of a Work at Home Mom (2007)*
- ❑ *How To Turn Your Blog Into A Book (2008)*
- ❑ *It Happened By Design (2008)*

All available at the bookstore on her website or via Amazon.com.

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PO Box 2044, Belgrave LPO, Victoria, Australia, 3160

Please send the following books.

It Happened By Design \$19.95 _____

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How To Become A Virtual Assistant \$15.95 _____

From Blog to Book \$5.95 _____

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Shipping by air

Australia: \$2.00 first book and \$1.50 for each book thereafter

International: \$6.50 for first book and \$4.00 for each
additional book.

Please allow 6-10 working days for delivery.

Kathie M Thomas

BIO - Kathie M Thomas

- Kathie M. Thomas is a successful Virtual Assistant who runs a VANetwork spanning many countries. She was a VA before the term 'virtual assistant' was in use.
- Kathie also has experience as a **Trainer and Coach** and began her business teaching others how to use Microsoft Office products in 1994.
- Kathie has two accreditations in the Virtual Assistant Industry as a Master Virtual Assistant and an Accredited Secretary Online.
- Kathie is a multi-award winner in her own Virtual Assistant business.
- Kathie is an industry leader who frequently speaks at public seminars and workshops throughout Australia about working virtually.
- During 2006 Kathie undertook a study of the **Proverbs 31 Woman** and recognised that this is what many women are seeking - to be at home with their families, whilst contributing to their family income. She has since published a book on this topic.
- Kathie has twice been nominated for "Australian of the Year" - 2008 & 2009.
- Kathie is listed in "Australia's Who's Who in Women" in 2009.
- Kathie also authors several blogs relating to her industry, interests and her passion of photography.



Kathie M. Thomas is an Author, Blogger, Speaker and Virtual Assistant Coach & Trainer. She began her business 'A Clayton's Secretary' in 1994 to be home fulltime for her 5 daughters.

Today Kathie runs a global business via the internet from her home office in Melbourne, Australia and her blogging efforts has placed her in the Top 100 Australian Blogs list. She also contributes to printed and online publications and has published several books.

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