

VA Hub Club

Monthly Module Outlines – August 2009 through April 2010

August 2009

VA Business Basics: About Virtual Assistance (beta month)

Week 1 (Aug 3):

- Article: A “Real-Life” Definition of a Virtual Assistant
- Assignment: Diversifying Your Services

Week 2 (Aug 10):

- Open Discussion: Your Path to Virtual Assistance
- Article: Factors to Consider When Starting a Virtual Assistance Business
- Bonus: VA Resource Links

Week 3 (Aug 17):

- Audio: IAAP Presentation Excerpt
- Bonus: What Do VAs Do For Clients
- Bonus: The Future of Virtual Assistance

Week 4 (Aug 24):

- Video Training: 27 Tips for Being a Successful Virtual Assistant
- Article: The Importance of Passion in Business

September 2009

VA Business Basics: Marketing Essentials

Monthly Module Summary: An introduction to the basic elements of marketing your business, from identifying your target audience to creating the core elements of a marketing campaign and starting to execute your strategy.

Week 1 (Sept. 1):

- Article: What is a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and Why You Need One
- Assignment: Draft Your USP **eCoaching Eligible**
- Open Discussion: What marketing activities have worked for you and what hasn't?

Week 2 (Sept. 7):

- Video Training: Marketing Materials 101: The What, How and Why of Marketing Collateral
- Article: Researching Your Industry, Clients and Competitors

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Week 3 (Sept. 14):

- Article: How to Develop a Marketing Strategy
- Article: Marketing Strategies vs. Marketing Plans
- Assignment: Create a One-Page Marketing Plan **eCoaching Eligible**

Week 4 (Sept. 21):

- Audio: Answers to questions from the Marketing Materials 101 video
- Article: The Power of Referrals
- Open Discussion: How have you leveraged word of mouth marketing in your business?

Week 5 (Sept. 28):

- Article: How to Write a Press Release
- Bonus: A Guide to Using Press Releases to Promote Your Business
- Bonus: Recommended Marketing Resources

October 2009

Client Relationships: Responding To and Winning RFPs

Monthly Module Summary: A look at proposals and how you can improve your odds for success with every RFP you respond to by following a specific formula and creating a standard template that you can modify and improve as you go.

Week 1 (Oct. 5):

- Article: The 4-Step Secret to Writing a Proposal that Gets Attention
- Article: Wait...Do You Really Need to Send a Formal Proposal?
- Open Discussion: RFP – Love 'Em or Hate 'Em?

Week 2 (Oct. 12):

- Article: Lost Opportunities = Gained Insight
- Video Training: Breaking Down Proposals – Background, Scope and Recommendations
- Assignment: Proposal Critique

Week 3 (Oct. 19):

- Article: Indispensable Tips for Proposal Writing
- Video Training: Breaking Down Proposals – Schedule and Cost
- Bonus: RFP Template

Week 4 (Oct. 26):

- Article: Places to Find RFPs
- Video Training: Breaking Down Proposals – Company Information and Next Steps
- Assignment: Put It In Action

November 2009

Marketing: Websites 101

Monthly Module Summary: An introduction to websites, including an overview of the most important factors you need to consider when establishing your online presence, and basic information for helping your site get found once you're online.

Week 1 (Nov. 2):

- Article: Content IS King When Creating a Website
- Article: 4 Must-Have Pages for Your Website
- Open Discussion: Is plagiarism running rampant on VA websites?
- Assignment: Website Research **eCoaching Eligible**

Week 2 (Nov. 9):

- Article: The Different Flavors of Websites
- Article: Branding Your Website
- Video Training: Very, Very Basic Do-It-Yourself SEO

Week 3 (Nov. 16):

- Article: Domains, Hosting, Email...Oh My!
- Assignment: Focus on Content **eCoaching Eligible**
- Bonus: How to Choose a Domain Name
- Open Discussion: Off-Topic Chat/Introductions/Discussion

Week 4 (Nov. 23):

- Article: An Overview of Website Maintenance
- Article: A New Website Checklist
- Audio: 10 Mistakes Commonly Made on Business Websites
- Bonus: Recommended Website Resources

December 2009

Marketing: Skinny (Budget) Marketing

Monthly Module Summary: Learn how to market your new or established business on a small budget by exploring activities that will get you the biggest bang for your buck.

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Week 1 (Dec. 1):

- Article: The Skinny on Skinny Marketing
- Article: Getting Ready to Market Your Business on a Budget
- Open Discussion: What low-cost marketing activities have you tried?

Week 2 (Dec. 7):

- Article: Creating a Skinny Marketing Budget
- Assignment: What's Your Skinny Budget? **eCoaching Eligible**
- Bonus: 20+ Social Networking Sites for Business

Week 3 (Dec. 14):

- Article: Getting Started with Word of Mouth Marketing
- Open Discussion: Off-Topic Chat/Introductions/Discussion

Week 4 (Dec. 21):

- Article: Skinny Marketing In Action
- Audio: Laying the Foundation for Client Referrals
- Assignment: Asking for Referrals and Saying Thank You **eCoaching Eligible**

Week 5 (Dec. 28):

- Article: The Power of "Small" Market Marketing
- Bonus: More Skinny Marketing Ideas: A Working Swipe File

January 2010

VA Business Basics: Setting (and Increasing) Your Rates

Monthly Module Summary: An overview of the rate-setting process, including discussion about the dangers of undermining your skills and experience by charging too little, ideas on how to raise your rates, and tools and resources to help you set an appropriate rate for your services.

Week 1 (Jan. 4):

- Article: What Should You Charge?
- Article: The Danger of Being the Low Cost Provider
- Open Discussion: How Has the Recession Affected Your Rates?
- Assignment: Calculate Your Rates **eCoaching Eligible**

Week 2 (Jan. 11):

- Article: Going Up! Time to Raise Your Rates
- Video: Rate Calculators and Pricing Resources
- Open Discussion: How Have You Overcome Objections About Your Rates?
- Bonus: Tips on Overcoming Objections about Your Rates

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Week 3 (Jan. 18):

- Article: Get Out of the Lending Business
- Article: Increase Your Profits Without Increasing Your Rates
- Assignment: Profit Maximizer **eCoaching Eligible**
- Bonus: Make Time to Make the Real Money

Week 4 (Jan. 25):

- Article: Charge for ALL of Your Time
- Article: Retainers, Incentives and Other Ways to Get Paid On Time
- Audio: You Are Worth It

February 2010

Technology: Reducing Overhead Expenses with Technology

Monthly Module Summary: Discover how you can use technology to reduce your business expenses, learn when you shouldn't cut expenses and create a plan for saving with technology in your business.

Week 1 (Feb. 1):

- Article: Get Started Cutting Costs with Technology the Right Way
- Article: 7 Easy Ways to Use Technology to Save in Your Business
- Open Discussion: How have you used technology to cut business expenses?

Week 2 (Feb. 8):

- Article: Using an Electronic Signature Service to Save Money (and Time)
- Assignment: Develop a Cost-Cutting Technology Plan **eCoaching Eligible**
- Bonus: Selecting the Best Free Teleconference Service and 7 Free Options to Consider

Week 3 (Feb. 15):

- Audio: 3 Signs You're Cutting Too Much
- Article: Ditch Your Landline and Go Virtual
- Article: Use Technology to Cut Expenses and Help the Environment

Week 4 (Feb. 22):

- Article: How to Choose the Right Software to Invest in for Your Business
- Video: A Tour of Online Training that Saves You Time and Money
- Bonus: 13 Open Source and Free Software to Save Your Business Money

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March 2010

Business Development: Creating a Contingency Plan

Monthly Module Summary: Develop a plan for maintaining your business and income level in case of an expected event that prevents you from working.

Week 1 (Mar. 1):

- Article: Contingency Plan Basics
- Article: The Five Stages of Contingency Planning
- Assignment: Risk Assessment **eCoaching Eligible**

Week 2 (Mar. 8):

- Article: Stage 1 – Identify Your Needs
- Article: Stage 2 – Analyze the Impact
- Assignment: Identifying and Analyzing Your Needs **eCoaching Eligible**

Week 3 (Mar. 15):

- Article: Stage 3 – Select Suitable Measures and Controls
- Assignment: Making Measurements **eCoaching Eligible**
- Bonus: List of Contingency Planning Software/Websites

Week 4 (Mar. 22):

- Article: Stage 4 – Develop Recovery Strategies
- Assignment: Mapping Your Recovery Strategies **eCoaching Eligible**
- Bonus: A Collection of Informational Downloads

Week 5 (Mar. 29):

- Article: Stage 5 – Build the Plan, then Test, Train and Maintain
- Article: How to Make Contingency Planning a Offered Service
- Assignment: Putting It All Together **eCoaching Eligible**

April 2010

Marketing: Social Networking for Business

Monthly Module Summary: An overview of top social networking sites and an introduction on how to use these sites to market your business.

Week 1 (Apr. 5):

- Article: Social Networking 101

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- Article: 5 Ways Social Networking Can Benefit Your Business
- Open Discussion: How do you use social networks?
- Video: Seth Godin on Social Networking

Week 2 (Apr. 12):

- Article: The Big 3 Basics – LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook
- Article: Using LinkedIn as a Business Networking Power Tool
- Assignment: Complete/Update Your LinkedIn Profile **eCoaching Eligible**

Week 3 (Apr. 19):

- Article: 5 No-No's in Social Networking for Business
- Article: 12 Ways to Keep Up with Social Media
- Video: How to Back Up Your Social Networking Content

Week 4 (Apr. 26):

- Article: How to Develop a Social Media Marketing Plan
- Assignment: Create/Expand Your Social Media Plan **eCoaching Eligible**
- Bonus: Social Network Symposium presentation and handouts