

VIRTUAL TIDBITS

DOCU-TYPE - VIRTUAL ASSISTANCE, WEB DESIGN & HOSTING

www.docutype.net 519-941-9523 jbyer@docutype.net

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Editor's Notes:

Welcome to the final issue of Virtual TidBits for 2008. Can you believe that Christmas is just around the corner? Halloween is barely a distant memory and already the flyers and stores are offering Christmas specials. Well, all those stores that are thinking ahead have great marketing minds. Now is the time to either start showcasing your holiday specials or at least thinking about what you will do (...think fast). Not to mention, you need to think about how you will say thank you to your clients and contacts.

In this issue of Virtual TidBits, we have included some of my articles with helpful hints and tips to prepare for the busy holiday season.

It may seem early to say this as well but we at Docu-Type want to thank all of our loyal clients, contacts and subscribers for another great year... a year when we celebrated 10 years in business and that couldn't have happened without you. We wish you all a very happy holiday season and a new year filled with love, good health and successful endeavours.



Happy Holidays everyone,

Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA

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What's New?

We're moving... that's what is new for this issue.

The offer on the house that I mentioned last issue was accepted and we got the approvals for our building plans from the Niagara Escarpment Commission (long story but basically the property is on protected land). So, over the next two months we will be fixing up and moving into a house and property that will allow us to have a few horses and a chance to ride them on their own turf :) Not to mention, Megan will have a place to practice her

riding skills and advance in a sport that she loves... equestrian jumping.

What an exciting time for us but what a lot of work. I tell myself every-time we move that I will never do it again but lookie... here we go again. The plan this time though is that this is it. This is our last house so let's make it good...LOL

Other than that, not too much is new. Our 10th anniversary special during September was a big hit and we received a lot of wonderful feedback from everyone, especially

*Celebrating our
10th Anniversary
(September 2008)*

those that took advantage of our ebook special. If you missed it, not to worry... it was such a success that we have decided to run the special again for the holidays. So, keep an eye on www.docutype.net/business_ebooks.htm as we will be posting the specials soon.

And finally, welcome to all our new clients and subscribers.

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Spotlight - Luxury Lifestyles

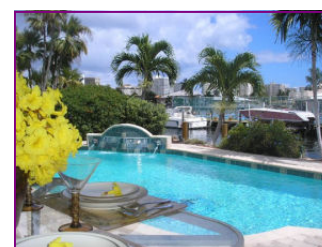
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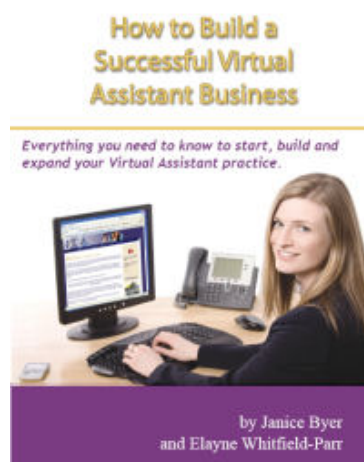
200+ pages, this book takes critical information needed to turn your desire to start your own Virtual Assistant business into a profitable endeavor that are guaranteed to bring success... including:

- ◆ 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>



A Little Bit of Fun - The Husband Store

A store that sells new husbands has opened in New York City, where a woman may go to choose a husband. Among the instructions at the entrance is a description of how the store operates:

You may visit this store ONLY ONCE! There are six floors and the value of the products increase as the shopper ascends the flights. The shopper may choose any item from a particular floor, or may choose to go up to the next floor, but you cannot go back down except to exit the building.

So, a woman goes to the Husband Store to find a husband. On the first floor the sign on the door reads:

Floor 1 - These men Have Jobs.
She is intrigued, but continues to the second floor, where the sign reads:

Floor 2 - These men Have Jobs and Love Kids..
'That's nice,' she thinks, 'but I want more.' So she continues upward. The third floor sign reads:

Floor 3 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids, and are Extremely Good Looking.
'Wow,' she thinks, but feels compelled to keep going. She goes to the fourth floor and the sign reads:

Floor 4 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids, are Drop-dead Good Looking and Help With Housework.

'Oh, mercy me!' she exclaims, 'I can hardly stand it!' Still, she goes to the fifth floor and the sign reads:

Floor 5 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids, are Drop-dead Gorgeous, Help with Housework, and Have a Strong Romantic Streak.
She is so tempted to stay, but she goes to the sixth floor, where the Sign reads:

Floor 6 - You are visitor 31,456,012 to this floor. There are no men on this floor. This floor exists solely as proof that women are impossible to please. Thank you for shopping at the Husband Store.

PLEASE NOTE:

To avoid gender bias charges, the store's owner opened a New Wives store just across the street.

The first floor has wives that are beautiful and love sex.

The second floor has wives that are beautiful, love sex, have money and like beer.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth floors have never been visited.

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Dates to Remember (for November/December 2008)

November:

1st - All Saints Day
2nd - Daylight Saving Time Ends
11th - Remembrance/Veteran's Day
27th - Thanksgiving (USA)



December:

21st - Winter Begins
24th - Christmas Eve
25th - Christmas Day
31st - New Year's Eve

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

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Cool Links

The following are some of my clients and their products which make wonderful Christmas gifts...

Mango Treehouse - <http://www.childrenstories.ca> - Wonderful stories, written by a proud grandmother, centering around the tales and fables told to children in Guyana and loved by children all over the world.

How to Have Amazing Kids - <http://www.guideyourchildren.com> - This book

is an A-Z guide on raising your children with character.

Greyden Equestrian Facility - <http://www.greylenequestrian.ca> - Know a horse lover? Why not get them a gift certificate for some riding lessons? (Located in Erin, Ontario)

Inspired Within - <http://www.inspiredwithin.com> - A guided visual CD to help reduce stress, insomnia and promote healing.

AJL Business Administrative & Bookkeeping Services - <http://www.ajlbusinessadminandbookkeepingservices.ca/> - Need a bookkeeper for your small business? Contact Barb. She may also have original Christmas cards available again this year.

And of course, buy a copy of [How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business](#) for the administrative person who wants to start their own business.

Creative Christmas Cards-A Great Gift Idea on a Limited Budget *by Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA*

Little Billie wants the latest Power Ranger. You know, the one that shoots lasers and turns into an 'Incredible Hulk' kind of thing. And little Sarah, she wants the newest Barbie, the one that 'all her friends have'. And then, of course, there's your beloved spouse who thinks he will just die if he doesn't get a new set of torque wrenches.

Ah... the joys of Christmas gift giving and the terror of going way over budget.

But wait.... don't forget that not only do you need to get that something special for your family and friends, you also need to take this time of year to show your clients that you truly appreciate and value them as well.

By now the question of going over budget is really starting to get scary. But it doesn't have to. Showing your appreciation doesn't mean you have to max out your credit card or take

out a second mortgage on the house. All you need to do is show your true feelings and be creative.

Let's start with the usual Christmas card. These are a given, and every entrepreneur should send these. And, if your limited budget means that this may be the only form of holiday cheer that you can share this year, let's make it special.

Most business professionals believe that it is not tactful to include your business card in with a Christmas card. The holiday card is supposed to be a means of showing appreciation, not a form of advertising. So, there are other subtle and creative ways to keep your name on their minds while still showing them that you care.

First, let's look at the envelope that you send the card in. They are usually pretty plain and blank. Ah, blank.... the perfect canvas, so what can we put there to 'fill some space' and show your creativeness?

Get your trusty word processor or graphics design program up and running and create a holiday image to print on the back of the envelope. Or perhaps put your favorite Christmas poem on there or a coupon for one of your products or services. You can include your website address in small print at the bottom. Oh, and don't forget to have the envelope in the closed (but not sealed) position when you run it through your printer. If the envelope is white, try to include some colour. But if the envelope is green or red (or any other colour), then it would be best to do the printing in black.

On the front of the envelope, don't forget to put your return address in the top left hand corner and perhaps add a little graphic of holly or bells at the bottom. If you can, put your website address or phone number in your return address.

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Creative Christmas Cards *(Cont'd)*

These last two suggestions will not only show your creativeness to your clients, it will also be seen by everyone that handles your envelope, from the time it leaves your office until the time your client actually opens it.

Another way to show your appreciation at this special time of year without spending a lot of money is to offer a special to your clients. Include a coupon with the card offering them free products or services. Remember to make it a limited time offer. This will help to generate some sales after the Christmas rush is over.

Speaking of including something in with the card, why not put together a list of websites that would be helpful to them, or perhaps a gift certificate from one of their favorite sites?

Also, if you have a small piece of promotional material (ie. pen, pencil, notepad, etc.), you can include it. Anything that will not be offensive at this time of year, will not be too 'advertisey', and something that will fit in the envelope.

If your budget is so limited that you can't afford to mail out cards, why not send some (or all) of them by email? There are some wonderful sites where you can send all kinds of cards, including animated or interactive ones.

These include <http://www.bluemountain.com>, <http://www.cardcentral.net>, <http://www.card4you.com>, and <http://www.hallmark.com>.

If you have ever read any of my other articles (<http://www.docutype.net/press.htm>) you know

that I truly believe that creativeness, and not the size of your wallet, makes for good communication between you and your clients. One of my favorite stores is the dollar store in town and you would be amazed at the ideas that you can come up with to help promote your business, on a limited budget, by just walking through the aisles.

Please remember to take each client into consideration when you send him or her something. Be creative and show a personal touch on your holiday sentiments and the rewards will come, not the credit card bill.

Janice Byer, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (<http://www.docutype.net>) provides professional, creative and affordable virtual office assistance and small business website design. She is a Certified Canadian Virtual Assistant (CCVA), Master Virtual Assistant (MVA) and co-founder of the Canadian Virtual Assistant Connection. She is also the author of several Business Building Ebooks (http://www.docutype.net/business_ebooks.htm) and co-author of How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business (<http://www.howtobuildavirtualassistantbusiness.com>).

"Every memorable act in the history of the world is a triumph of enthusiasm. Nothing great was ever achieved without it because it gives any challenge or any occupation, no matter how frightening or difficult, a new meaning. Without enthusiasm you are doomed to a life of mediocrity but with it you can accomplish miracles."

Og Mandino
1923-1996, *Speaker and Author*

Christmas Gift Giving on a Budget *by Janice D. Byer, CCVA, MVA*

For many entrepreneurs, our clients are not only our source of income, some are also our friends. We appreciate them for far more than how much work we do for them. We should show our appreciation throughout the year to these valued people but especially during the holiday season.

Yup... it's that time of year... time to think about how to best display your thanks to your valued clients and contacts for being a part of your business and its success. Not all entrepreneurs can afford big gifts, especially in the start-up phase.

There are certain things that you can give to your clients that you could make yourself. Not only can this be a way of showing your appreciation, it is also a way to give your personal touch to the gift. And when you add that personal touch, your clients will be reassured of your exceptional customer service, thoughtfulness, and why you are, or soon will be, successful!

When you provide personal gifts you also gain a sense of fulfillment. It is very heart-warming to know the appreciation that will be felt by your clients for your special efforts.

The following are just a few ideas of homemade gifts that are both economical and personal:

Coasters - You know all those CDs you get in the mail, newspapers and magazine? Hang onto them and create coasters from them. You can get CD labels at office supply stores on which you can print a design, picture, or info about your business; foam or cork backing at craft supply stores; and lacquer finish (that will withstand heat) at home repair or paint stores.

Bookmarks - Pick up some coverstock paper at your local business supply store and design a bookmark. You can print a full sheet of them on the coverstock. You will then have to cut them or you may be able to get perforated cards in the shape of bookmarks. Again, anything can be put on here, including just lines with the heading "Notes From This Book". For an added touch, buy some tassels and punch a hole in the top of the cards to put the tassel in to.

Calendars - Everyone needs calendars, especially busy entrepreneurs. The following are just a couple of relatively easy calendars that you can create and they make the perfect gift.

Pocket Calendars - You don't need a laminating machine to whip together a few business card calendars, perfect for carrying in a wallet. Most business supply stores carry self-laminating sheets. You simply put together a small calendar with your desktop publishing software, cut them the size of your business card and glue them on the back, arrange them on the laminating sheets and cut them to size.

Wall Calendars - Again, your desktop publishing software can be used to design each month and print them on separate sheets of paper. As an added touch, allow room to list inspirational sayings, put in a word search puzzle, or a light comic strip (being careful not to go against any copyrights). Then put each month into a sheet protector remembering to set them up like a normal wall, flip calendar. Slide a binder clip over the top ends and punch a hole in the center of the other end and your calendar is ready to be hung up. And don't forget to send a dry erase marker so your client can write down their appointments.

Magnetic Calendars - You have a couple of choices here. You can put your business card or enlightening phrases on a magnetic sheet and attach them to a tear-off calendar. Or, you can use pre-cut business card size magnetic sheets to make a card holder, note page holder, or small calendar. Actually, with the larger magnetic sheets, you can let your imagination run wild.

Gift Certificates - Design a gift certificate to provide your clients with one of the services you have to offer. If your client generally has web design services from you, offer them one of your administrative services so they can see the variety of help that you can provide them. Or, how about offering your client free ad space in your newsletter or a banner ad on your website. One thing to remember is to put different time frames on each certificate. The last thing you need is to have everyone redeem his or her gift certificates at the same time.

Key Chains - Here's where your self-laminating skills will come in handy again. Design small key chain cards, putting your company information on one side. On the other side, put your client's information; a scenic picture; calendar; or marketing tips. You can include just about anything that would appeal to your clients.

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Gift Giving on a Budget *(cont'd)*

You will have to pick up some key rings (be sure to check yard sales, dollar stores, and craft supply stores) and then simply laminate the cards, punch a hole in one end and slip the key ring in that hole.

Here's a tip... be sure to cut the laminate sheet far enough around the card so that water will not get in. You may even want to punch the hole in the card first and then punch a smaller whole in the laminate so there is some sealing there.

Another idea, if your budget will allow, check with your local dollar store or craft supply store to see if they have key chains that will allow you to insert your own message. Less work but could be more costly.

You get the idea. Let your imagination create something both personal and professional. Each of these ideas will take time to do so be sure to start in plenty of time to create them and then send them to your clients. One thing about these ideas is that your budget will thank you. Take a look around your office right now.... What can you use to make a special gift?

Janice Byer, CCVA, MVA, owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (<http://www.docutype.net>) provides professional, creative and affordable virtual office assistance and small business website design. She is the author of several Business Building Ebooks (http://www.docutype.net/business_ebooks.htm) and co-author of How to Build a Successful Virtual Assistant Business (<http://www.howtobuildavirtualassistantbusiness.com>).



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