



Why Did I Become A Virtual Assistant?

by *Jef Keep* / *Marlene Oulton*

I've often been asked "Why did you become a Virtual Assistant?" and "How did the Daily Planet come into being?" Well, for all you enquiring minds out there who want to know, here's my story in all its glory.

Way, way back in the Stone Age, I was working for a small downtown business consulting company in Toronto, when out of the blue - bam! - I was downsized out of my job. I suddenly found myself jobless and living in a rural area where the job employment prospects looked dismal at best. I had reached a crossroads in my career-life and had a decision to make - whether to take on the prospect of obtaining a new position that required a two-hour commute (one-way!), back into the city of Toronto, or create my own "job" by becoming an entrepreneur.

After three months of fruitless job searching, I discovered an article on the Virtual Assistant industry and I dove in with gusto! My search for gainful employment was over once I started reading about this fabulous new venture. Not only would I have the opportunity to provide other small businesses by satisfying their need for quality administrative assistance, but this would allow me to literally re-create my own working environment as well. Since my last three jobs in the corporate world involved being an office manager running the administration side of various businesses, this was an area where I had gained valuable skill sets, which I could now offer to my potential new clients.

I enrolled in a local Entrepreneurship course; completed a detailed business plan; purchased additional office equipment and boom! - the Daily Planet came into being.

At first, I concentrated on offering basic administrative office services but as I continued to add to my knowledge base, I found that suddenly I was attracting a different type of client with more specialized requirements. My former 'niche' market was slowly evolving into what is now the core of my current business. By adding HTML and web maintenance, as well as shopping cart set-up, newsletter creation, conversion of audio files etc. to my repertoire of virtual offerings, I started receiving emails and calls from business owners, life coaches, and SOHO's asking me to take over this sometimes complicated side of managing their online companies. I happily obliged as I had found the area where I truly felt I excelled the most.

It's now been almost 18 months since the Daily Planet started 'revolving' on the great Internet highway, and I've never once regretted venturing 'out of the box' and starting my own business. I derive a great sense of personal satisfaction from seeing the enthusiastic responses from my clients pouring into my inbox on a regular basis and I will be forever grateful for stumbling upon that article on the expanding new business called "Virtual Assistants." In addition, I certainly don't miss the 'road rage' and burnout of having to travel four hours to work in an uncertain marketplace just to eek out a living.

Life is good on the Daily Planet. Should you (and your company) like to join me in this great new world, contact me by email at jef@dailyplanetvirtual.ca for more information!

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