

# Newsletter

## Executive Stress Office Support

### Welcome!

Boy! *That* three months flew by! And it's been a very, very active time!

The BIG news is that during August I became Australia's first certified Master Virtual Assistant! In addition, I became one of only two Australian VAs who are EthicsChecked certified. See the article on page 2 for the whole story.

The first Annual VA Conference is to be held in Dallas and the industry is very excited about it. See page 3 for the details.

I've been busy preparing an awards submission for the upcoming Micro Business Network Awards (see page 4), formulating a new Client Referral Policy (page 4), assisting with getting the Forest Lake Small Business Guild up and running (page 5), and continuing to service our expanding client base! Phew!

Don't forget: I'm here to make your life simpler, so next

time you have staff on leave or need that extra pair of hands, give me a call.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter! It's a big 'un! Till next quarter.



Virtually yours

Lyn P-B



October 2001

Volume 1, Issue 2

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## Digital Transcription: Increase your Productivity!

If you currently use tape transcription in your business, you will certainly benefit from switching to digital. You can turn your computer into a professional transcription system allowing you to dictate or transcribe digital .wav files with your PC or laptop without needing audio cassettes. In addition to the obvious cost-savings (no more buying tapes and servicing transcription equipment), you benefit from no audio file limits (recorded files can be 0.1 seconds to 10 hours!), better sound quality, no more lost tapes, and a lifetime guarantee (with

maintenance option).

One product on the market is Australian-owned Quikscribe (see [www.quikscribe.com.au](http://www.quikscribe.com.au)).

The Recorder comprises a small hand-held recording device which plugs into the Com port of your computer. No bigger than your mouse, you can record, play rewind, fast forward, insert and overwrite, send and create a new file with buttons right at your finger tips.

The Player includes a headset and foot-pedal, enabling the typist to control the audio file in the same way as a

traditional tape. The typist can also vary the play rate and volume in the same way as traditional tape.

The Recorder has the ability to insert text attachments within an audio file, which means rather than recording verbatim an entire letter or report, you can cut and paste large amounts of text from previous documents, web sites, or reference CDs into your document. This significantly cuts dictation time. This has benefits for the typist too - s/he is alerted when the embedded

(Continued on page 3)

## Virtual Assistant's in the News

The ePOWERnews (www.epowernews.com) reported that Ben Coleman, a realtor with C21 Hartford Properties in San Francisco, "now uses three virtual assistants to help him win and manage new business". One of his VAs, lives in Michigan!

"I have about three different Virtual Assistants now doing my newsletters, CMAs and bookkeeping. I love it and I'm still busy so I can't believe how I ever functioned before!" said Ben.

Ben goes on to say that having received a lead from his telemarketer, he made an appointment for the next morning at 10am to meet with them.

"I called my VA and told her that I was faxing listings and emailing photos to prepare the CMA for first thing in the morning. The owners were so impressed with the presentation and

preparation, that they listed with me right then and there! Couldn't have done it without the virtual assistant."



Canadian based MVA Janice Byer was featured in a recent article in Small Business Canada (www.sbinfocanada.about.com). Her business, Docu-Type Administrative Services, won the Most Successful Start Up 2000 award, presented by the Pinnacle Awards for Business Women of Distinction, and was also chosen as the Home Based Business of the Year 2000 by the Brampton area Small Business Enterprise Centre.

Docu-Type Administrative Services is a VA and website design company that "helps small business owners get a handle on their overflow without breaking their budgets". Janice's

company provides everything from wordprocessing and bookkeeping/payroll services through web site design and maintenance services.

Janice says that the biggest challenge facing her business today is finding enough time to continue marketing as her client base and workload has increased tremendously. To overcome this challenge, Janice prioritises and schedules ruthlessly, writing a list each day of what has to be accomplished during that specific day or over the next few days.

It's no wonder Janice chose the image of a gerbil on a running wheel when asked to describe herself as an animal; she is, she says, always on the go! ❖

## Certification: What's it mean for YOU?

By Lyn Prowse-Bishop, MVA

The issue of certification has been a hotly debated one in the VA industry of late. Some VAs think it's important, others not so.

Certification is recognised in many industries as the benchmark for measuring capability, and the VA industry should be no different. Many VAs believe that certification sets them apart from the rest of the group - just like typing 125wpm can!

Then there is the question of whether the certification should be linked to a particular organisation or be stand alone. A number of organisations currently offer certification, but a VA must maintain their membership of the organisation in order to maintain their

certification. The certifications offered

**"Certification sets you apart from the rest - just like typing 125 wpm can!"**

by the International Virtual Assistants Association (IVAA) and A Claytons Secretary (ACS) are examples of two such programs. The ACS certification looks at work carried out, any professional development done during the work period and involvement with any study programs, software knowledge, active involve-

ment with industry-based groups etc.

When looking at the question of certification, I felt that whilst membership of networking VA organisations was important, it shouldn't determine whether I achieved certification status. As one VA in the US, Janet Jordan, MVA, notes: "If you graduate from Harvard, whether or not you choose to participate in alumni activities, your degree still stands, and so should a certification."

VACertification.com, the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) and Staffcentry are three well established VA

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## Digital Transcription contd.

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text attachment is reached in the audio file by a system message, and simply pastes the attachment into the transcribed document!

If you need to record additional information within a current audio file, rather than appending this information at the end of the file, you can now rewind to the specific location and insert the audio - which automatically moves the rest of the audio backwards within the file. You can set priorities for your files and set up a hierarchy of typists in your Settings so that if your usual typist doesn't get to the file within a period of time it will automatically be sent to the next typist in your list - or you can attach the file to an email and send to your Virtual Assistant! The Recorder compresses the file before emailing reducing email size and enabling faster transmission. File encryption is also available.

Audio files can be kept for a specified period of time, even once completed, and there is also the ability to track the

progress of files.

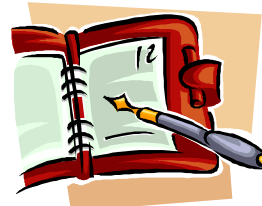
If a typist needs clarification about something within a file, they can insert a location marker in the file and keep transcribing, going back later to the marker to seek clarification.

If you would like more information about this revolutionary software please contact us on 3379-8360. 14 day free trials are available from the Quikscribe site! ❖

## New Clients

The following new clients benefited from partnering with Executive Stress Office Support and we welcome them all!

- Queensland Conservatorium of Music
- Maurice F Cassidy, Dental Surgeon
- Biolytix Australasia



If you haven't discovered the benefits of partnering with a VA yet, give us a call and we'll answer all your questions.

## VA Conference 2001

### "Paving the Way for Pathways to Success"

It's official! The First Annual Virtual Assistance Industry Conference is to be held 19 and 20 October 2001, in the beautiful and richly historic city of Dallas, Texas.

Registration to the conference is only US\$30.

Highlights of the event include:

- Friday night social
- Saturday hosted brunch
- Workshop on Business Planning
- Workshop on Marketing your business
- Workshop/forum on the Virtual Operations Centre designed to promote the VA Industry
- Happy hour social
- Dinner for attendees



The inaugural VA Conference in Dallas will give VA's all around the world an opportunity to have a voice in the way the industry progresses in the next 5 years.

Opinions will be sought from delegates as to how they believe the industry should progress over the near term (1 year), short term (3 years) and long term (5 years).

Accommodation is being provided to delegates by the Holiday Inn Select, Love Field.

Any business interested in becoming a Convention sponsor should contact the organiser, Mr Alfred Gandee, MVA, via email at [info@VAConference.com](mailto:info@VAConference.com).

More information on the conference can be found at [www.VAConference.com](http://www.VAConference.com). ❖

*(If anyone knows how to get me a cheap fare to Dallas, I'm all ears!!! - Lyn)*

## Certification (contd)

(Continued from page 2)

organisations who offer certification to non-members and members alike.

VACertification.com verifies your past credentials and awards two levels of certification (Professional VA and Master VA) based on your experience, education and references. These are weighted against a matrix and business references are stringently checked. Standards for ethics are high and VAs who do not operate their practices in an ethical manner have their certification revoked. The certification is good for two years.

Staffcentrix offers VAs an Ethics Checked certification in the form of an online examination testing business ethics. Before taking the examination

the VA must first agree to adhere to the Staffcentrix Code of Ethics which can be found at [www.staffcentrix.com/ec\\_coe.htm](http://www.staffcentrix.com/ec_coe.htm). Examinees must achieve a score of at least 77% in order to pass the exam. VAs who pass receive the EthicsChecked Trustmark seal and a certification number. The certification is good for two years.

IAAP offer two certification ratings: Certified Professional Secretary and Certified Administrative Professional. Candidates must have at least two years work experience as an admin professional in the past 15 years and take a one day exam with three parts (CPS) or a one and a half day exam with four parts (CAP), covering such things

as finance and business law, office systems and admin, management and organisational planning.

To be certified or not remains a personal choice for VAs. Unfortunately, as the industry expands and more and more individuals calling themselves VAs enter the marketplace, there is the risk that clients will come upon unethical VAs. It will become a commercial decision for clients whether they choose a certified VA or not. ❖

*(Lyn Prowse-Bishop is Australia's first certified Master Virtual Assistant and the second to receive the EthicsChecked Trustmark certification. Lyn also sits as the only Australian on the VACertification.com Review Board (as at publication date)*

## Awards

The 2001 Australian Micro Business Awards are designed to recognise and reward micro businesses for the valuable contribution they make to the Australian economy.

A micro business employs 5 or less people on a full-time basis and 88% of all small businesses in Australia are micro.



The Micro Business of the Year receives a trophy, a prize valued at \$2000 and a gold and diamond pin!

Entrants from Tasmania, SA and Victoria will be judged together, NSW and ACT will be judged together, and NT and WA will be judged together. Queensland will be judged separately.

Each entrant is acknowledged, with State winners in each category receiving a certificate, a subscription to the Micro Business Network, plus other prizes.

Each National winner will receive a

certificate and prizes to the value of \$500 from category sponsors.

The Australian Micro Business of the Year will be awarded a trophy, a prize to the value of \$2000, and a gold and diamond pin designed by Nicholas Pike, the 1998 Micro Business of the Year.

Categories in the awards are:

- ★ Women in Business
- ★ Emerging Business
- ★ Established Business
- ★ Home Based Business
- ★ Special Youth Award
- ★ Special Micro Marketing Web Award

Executive Stress Office Support has entered the Emerging Business Category. State Presentations will take place on Thursday 11 October.

## New Policy

We've recently instituted a Client Referral Policy:

### Client Referral Policy:

For those clients who refer new paying clients you'll receive **10% or \$50** (whichever is greater) off your next invoice of \$100 or more.

So get referring! There's got to be people you know who can benefit from partnering with a professional Virtual Assistant! ❖

National winners, announced at this State presentation will attend the National presentation in Canberra on Tuesday 23 October. ❖



## Spotlight On: Kate Gorce-Macham

Kate Gorce-Macham, Managing Director and Founder of Virtual Business Australia (VBA), is a passionate advocate of this exciting new business sector in Australia.

Once a computer science drop out, Kate's love for technology was reignited when she worked in information technology at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. "It was an exciting time to be in a UN agency as the large WANGs were being wheeled out and PCs started hitting the desks of international civil servants rapidly," Kate recalls of those days, which were filled with hardware and software installations, training staff to use all this new equipment and many desktop publishing projects.

Back in Australia, Kate was working in Perth in the finance industry, when she decided to combine parenting and a professional occupation by setting up her own virtual business in 1997.

"My life took an interesting twist when our baby daughter was born in 1996 and I realised that having a career and being the caring parent I wanted to be weren't going to be necessarily compatible if I

was to return to a traditional workplace. With available technology working 'virtually' with clients just seemed to be a much smarter way of accommodating my professional aspirations and a happy home life."

"One day a journalist contacted me to write an article about the way I was working and from the day the story was published my phone didn't stop ringing and e-mails arrived by the hundreds... There were just so many people out there who were inspired by the way I was working that it was a natural progression for me to set-up a business helping others do what I had done."

"The business has grown so much with members all over Australia now."

"Someone asked me what I 'do' the other day and I answered 'I motivate, inspire and connect people, online', which raised an eyebrow of course! Then I added that 'I encourage people to create a new workstyle/lifestyle

by embracing technology and connecting with other business people who are also keen to embrace a new way of working by outsourcing instead of taking on or increasing the employee burden'. And that's the main objective of Virtual Business Australia!"

Kate has some wise advice for others who want to start their own business: "Don't give up your day job immediately. Take time to decide what you love doing most; assess the risks involved in your new venture, then be courageous and break down the stereotypes and myths of your past by doing something new, adventurous and rewarding." ❖

Virtual Business Australia Pty Ltd was established in March 2000 and was founded from a true desire to assist others to empower themselves, build a successful business, do work they really love, earn the money they want, and create more time for themselves and their other life commitments, by providing them with access to leading edge products and services and an on-line community of peers to lessen the impact of working in isolation.

VBA's main objective is to educate other businesses about how to access services delivered on-line to meet their outsourcing requirements. ❖

**Executive Stress**  
OFFICE SUPPORT

"Professional Assistance for the 21st Century Professional!"

Phone: +61-7-3379-8360  
Fax: +61-7-3379-8360  
Email: lyn@execstress.com

PO Box 1036  
Oxley Qld 4075  
Australia



## Forest Lake Small Business Guild

The Forest Lake Small Business Guild was started 12 months ago with the mission to "work together in as many ways as possible to further individual businesses and create a healthy climate in Forest Lake for development of business in general." ESOS has been a member since July 2001, providing the Guild's secretarial needs FOC, including database management, Member Directory production, minutes of meetings, invoicing, calendar maintenance and event arrangement.



The FLSBG's main aim is to help develop and encourage local business.

The next 12 months should see the Guild really begin to get involved in community-based activities, and more activities, seminars and workshops are planned for Guild members. Committee meetings and networking functions are currently held monthly, with business development activities planned quarterly.

If you think you can assist the Guild in meeting its mission, through speakers or business improvement workshops, please call Lyn on 3379-8360 to discuss. ❖