

Executive Stress

OFFICE SUPPORT

Newsletter — June 2003

Welcome!

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What's that old saying? There are only two things certain in this life: death and taxes. Well it's tax time again. Boy it comes around faster each year!

Have you got all your receipts and other tax paraphernalia in order?

I find it easiest to keep things in a folder that sits in a hanging file right in front of my keyboard. I start 1 July and every receipt and tax-related slip of paper that passes through my hands or

over my desk gets dropped in there so that come June 30, I know where it all is!

It's been a busy three months since the last newsletter, with clients coming and clients going ... but all in all the "coming" ones exceeding the "going" ones! :) We assisted a client all the way over in West Australia this quarter, as well as one in Philadelphia, USA, showing yet again that it doesn't matter where your VA is located!

Other news is that we've just added some more FTP capability to the website for easier access by subcontractors, and will soon be adding some secure chat space. This will be useful for "getting

together" with remote clients to discuss their needs ... and it's cheaper than the phone!

I've also begun hosting a Forum for one of my clients in the USA and this has been a particularly rewarding experience for me, as I get the opportunity to mix with a wide variety of women from around the world, sharing experiences and wisdom. The work of a VA is **never** boring!

"Tax reform means, 'Don't tax you, don't tax me. Tax that fellow behind the tree'."

Russell Long

And I'm planning a party for a 4 year old in a couple of weeks - yes that's **MY** 4 year old if you can believe it!! I think I'm going to have more fun than she will!

In this newsletter I've also included the text of a couple of emails I received in the last three months Whilst I'm not one to propagate the "nuisance" emails that plague our inboxes every day, I did think that the contents of these were worth sharing. Have a look at **"The Times They Are a Changin'"** and **"Beauty Tips from Audrey Hepburn"**, both on page 3.

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Remember, if you are not sure whether we handle a particular task, just ask - I'll bet we can!

Till next quarter.

Virtually yours
Lyn P-B

v

After the events of the last few months ...

"Pretty much all the honest truth-telling there is in the world is done by children."

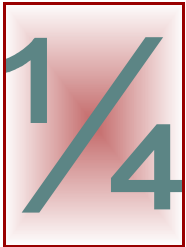
Oliver Wendell Holmes

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Word Tip: Inserting Fractions

There was a discussion recently in Woody's Office Watch about inserting fractions - not the pre-built 1/4, 1/2 and 3/4 that Word has, but fractions like 5/8, 13/16 and so on.



There are a couple of ways to do it. The easiest of course is (using 5/8 as our example) to type the **5** the **/** and the **8**, then highlight the 5 and click Format | Font and select Superscript; then highlight the 8, click Format | Font and select Subscript.

The problem is that if you have a pre-built Word fraction on the same line they can look a bit out of kilter with this re-jigged 5/8 fraction.

You could also use the slash available in the Symbols menu (Insert | Symbol) and you could also italicise the slash. This helps but it's still not perfect.

Here's how Woody Leonhard creates the fraction by hand:

Type 1/4 and a space, so you get one of those fancy pre-built "1/4" characters on your screen.

Click on the Zoom box on the Standard Toolbar and run the zoom up to 200%, or thereabouts, so that you can see the fraction you're going to build and try to make it look as much like the fancy "1/4" as possible.

Type the fraction you want to create - in our example,

5/8

Select the 5. Click Format | Font, and make the font smaller, over in the Size box. In my experiments with Garamond, Arial and Times New Roman at 10 and 11 points (which are the fonts and sizes I normally use), I found that 6 points was about right.

Click the Character Spacing Tab and in the Position box pick Raised. You want to raise (superscript) the first number. I found that when I was using 11 point text, raising the first number by 4 points was about right. When using 10 point text, raising by 3 points looked best to me. You be the judge. When you're happy, click OK.

Select the last number. (In this example, 8.) Click Format | Font, and make the font the same size as you did for the first number. Again, I found 6 point just about right.

Now select the first number, the slash, and the second number, all together. Click Format | Font | Character Spacing. In the Spacing box, pick Condensed, and adjust the "squish factor" - the amount of space Word should squeeze out between

the first number, slash, and last number. I found that 1 point worked best for my usual text.

Take a gander under high zoom factor. I bet you'll find that your fractions don't look as good as the built-in fractions. For one thing, the slash isn't exactly the same. For another, the numbers "fit" better on the fancy built-in fractions because they're hand kerned. But all in all, I'm impressed with how well these turn out with just a few clicks.

Once you have a good fraction set up, write down the settings - the font size, superscript amount and Character Spacing amount - so you don't have to swing up your Zoom factor the next time you need a good-looking fraction.

Or you could turn it into an **Auto Correct** entry. Turning a hand-formatted fraction into an AutoCorrect entry is pretty easy, but there's one stumbling point: you need to create one entry for each font and point size that you're going to use. For example, if you want a "2/3" fraction for Garamond 11 point and a "2/3" fraction for Arial 10 point, you need to create two different AutoCorrect entries.

Here's how:

Follow the steps in the preceding section to make and format a fraction the way you like it.

Select the fraction.

Click Tools | AutoCorrect (or AutoCorrect Options, if you're using Word 2002/Office XP).

Your fraction appears in the With: box.

Check the button next to the With: box marked "Formatted Text".

Click in the Replace box, and type whatever text you want to have replaced by the fraction. For example, my "2/3" fraction formatted in Garamond 11 point (the font I usually use for business correspondence) is:

g2/3

Click OK.

From that point on, whenever I type g2/3 in a document, Word replaces what I typed with a perfectly formatted "2/3".

▼

You can subscribe to Woody's Office Watch by sending an email to : wow@woodyswatch.com

Times They Are a Changin'...!

The following is the content of an email I received recently - you may have seen it. Those of us who grew up in the 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s and perhaps even the early 80s, should not have survived given the bureaucracy that touches the lives of our kids today. Enjoy!

I Can't Believe We Made It!

Our baby cribs were covered with bright coloured lead-based paint.

We had no childproof lids or locks on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets.

Not to mention the risks we took hitchhiking.

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags. Riding in the back of a ute on a warm day was always a special treat.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.

We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank soft drink with sugar in it, but we were never overweight because we were always outside playing.

We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle, and no one actually died from this.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the street lights came on. No one was able to reach us all day. No mobile phones.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo 64, X-Boxes, no video games at all, no 99 channels on cable, video tape



movies, DVDs, surround sound, mobile phones, personal computers, or Internet chat rooms.

We had friends! We went outside and found them.

We played dodge ball, and sometimes, the ball would really hurt.

We fell out of trees, got cut and broke bones and teeth, and there were no lawsuits from these accidents. They were accidents. No one was to blame but us. Remember accidents?

We had fights and punched each other and got black and blue and learned to get over it.

We made up games with sticks and tennis balls and, although we were told it would happen, we did not put out any eyes.

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's home and knocked on the door or rang the bell or just walked in and talked to them.

Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment.

Some students weren't as smart as others, so they failed a grade and were held back to repeat the same grade.

Tests were not adjusted for any reason.

Our actions were our own. Consequences were expected.

The idea of parents bailing us out if we got in trouble in school or broke a law was unheard of.

They actually sided with the school or the law.

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Beauty Tips ... From Audrey Hepburn

Audrey Hepburn ... one of my all-time favourite Hollywood icons. She received two Oscars and over 50 other awards and international distinctions for her work in film and later for her humanitarian efforts on behalf of children. The following is a poem Audrey wrote when asked to share her beauty tips. It was read at her funeral in 1993. We could all learn a thing or two from Ms Hepburn.



*For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.
For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.
For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.
For beautiful hair, let a child run his/her fingers through it once a day.*



For poise, walk with the knowledge that you never walk alone.

People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone.

Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you will find one at the end of each of your arms.

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands; one for helping yourself, and the other for helping others. ▼



(Continued from page 3)

This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers, problem solvers and inventors, ever. We had freedom, failure, success, and responsibility - and we learned how to deal with it. And you're one of them!

Congratulations! ✓

The following new clients benefited from partnering with eSOS during the last three month, and we welcome them all!

- 📄 Dr Camile S Farah, QLD (Digital Transcription)
- 📄 Eagle St Associates, QLD (Function arrangements)
- 📄 Mr Gregory Duhl, Philadelphia, USA (Internet research; copyediting)
- 📄 The Marketing Centre, Subiaco, WA (Digital Transcription)

VAs Versus Temps By Janice Byer, Docu-Type Administrative Services, Canada

The following article has been reprinted with permission, and has been edited due to space constraints.

One of the biggest challenges [faced by the VA] is convincing prospective, and sometimes apprehensive, clients of the benefits of utilizing the professional services of a Virtual Assistant (VA). And, an additional aspect of that challenge is to project the advantages of VAs in comparison to temporary agencies and their employees... the VA's competition. With that in mind, we will cover here some of the important differences [between VAs and Temps].

1. Temporary employees (temps) are just that, temporary. They're here today and may be gone tomorrow. A VA, on the other hand, is available on an ongoing basis or can be called upon, at short notice, when an extra pair of administrative hands is required.

2. VAs take a vested interest in the success of their clients and their businesses. VAs believe that the absolute best job possible will not only help their own reputation but will also help to build the client's business. ... A temp, however, may look at the assignment as just a means of padding their resume or getting a paycheck.

3. Training and experience is also an issue when comparing VAs to temps. VAs are generally those that have had many, many years of experience out in the workforce. This knowledge, along with any additional training and schooling, allows them to provide a wide [range] of services, all of which they have had many years to perfect. VAs also tend to be more [likely] to upgrade their skills in order to provide their clients with the most up to date and professional services Temps, on the other hand, may be ... right out of school with little or no 'on the job' experience, or those who are simply looking for something to fill their time. Not to mention, when a temp is hired, they have to be trained. Now, if that temp is not available when the next assignment crops up, another temp will have to be brought in and thus more time is needed to train that employee. And so on.

4. Now, let's look at the rate differences. Actually, the two may seem similar in cost but not in other aspects. The rate paid to the temp is actually split between the temp and the agency that contracts them out. Then it must be taken into

consideration the time the client needs to spend training the temp, the space used ... and the equipment ... needed [which] requires maintenance. A VA's rates ... help to upgrade equipment, software and skills. This, in turn, allows for more and better services to be available for the client. It also means that the client doesn't need to worry about providing space and maintaining equipment that a temp would need, which can get quite costly when in the hands of an inexperienced employee.

5. The next difference is to look at the types of clients that temps and VAs are most likely to be contracted by. Medium to large companies generally would call in a temp when they have enough work to keep them busy for an extended period of time or when the work involves specific duties that need to be handled in-house (ie. reception).

However, these companies may also have a need for the services of a VA when they have an occasional project that requires immediate, experienced attention or when they do not have the training time or equipment available for a temp. Small business owners and SOHOs ... are most likely to need and utilize the services of a VA as opposed to bringing in a temp. The projects are usually varied and may be far between or not enough to keep an employee busy in-house. The completion of the project may also be hampered by the lack of space and equipment [required by a temp]

6. VAs charge for the actual work they do, hour for hour, whereas a temp is paid for time worked and any time they sit idle, waiting for more work or another project to do.

7. And, unlike a temp who has loyalty to the agency they are contracted through, a VA is ... an entrepreneur and works with and for the client. As a fellow small business owner, a VA has a vested interest in the success of their client's business.

Although temp agencies are more visible to the public, due to their increased size and marketing budgets, they are not the only answer to help alleviate the administrative overflow for both small and large businesses. ... VAs are [often] the best answer [for] their office assistance needs.

Janice Byer is a certified Canadian Virtual Assistant, Master Virtual Assistant and owner of Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services (<http://www.docu-type.net>). Celebrating 5 years in business, she has authored a new ebook to share the secrets of 5 successful years. Visit her website for more details. ✓

