

Executive Stress[®]

OFFICE SUPPORT

"Professional Virtual Assistance for the 21st Century Professional!"

June 2006

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Welcome!

It's BEEN A big three months. The inaugural Online International VA Convention got underway during May and it was a terrific event utilising some fantastic VoIP (live voice) web-conferencing technologies! Details of the convention - and the International VA Day celebrations - are included on p2.

One - of many - exciting aspects of the event was that I was nominated for the Thomas Leonard International VA of Distinction Award. It was so exciting to think that colleagues thought highly enough of me to nominate me ... and given the scope of Virtual Assistance globally, it truly is an honour to be recognised.

Other news of course has been the miraculous survival and rescue of the Beaconsfield miners. It's always great to get good news for a change, and I think we were all glued to the TV holding our collective breath waiting for Brant Webb and Todd Russell to emerge from the mine shaft. They certainly breed 'em tough in Tassie!

The financial year is drawing to a close and it's time to get all your receipts into order for the tax man. Don't forget, a VA can help you

with this horrendous task, at the same time giving you the gift of time!

Further to our article on Blogs last issue, we've started the eSOS blog ... you can find it here: <http://execstress.blogspot.com/> Check it out and feel free to post a comment.

Other news of note is I turn the big 4-0 this year - yay! Happy birthday to me! :) To celebrate I'm taking my family away to Vanuatu for a week. That means the practice will be closed for the first time in **FOUR YEARS** for the week of **19 August to 27 August inclusive**. Clients will be notified again of the closure closer to the date, but please note it now so you can

send presents in plenty of time! :) Kidding! But do please note the dates and if we need to make arrangements for coverage during that week please contact me so this can be done.

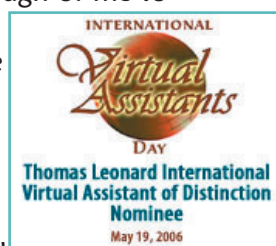
Till next quarter!

Virtually yours

Lyn P.B

"Children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see."

- Anon



What's a VA DO?

EVER WONDERED what sorts of things a Virtual Assistant actually can do? One of my clients did and recently asked me for a list. I thought I'd include it here for those who may also be wondering what sorts of tasks a VA can perform. And remember, just because it's not on the list doesn't mean it can't be done by a VA!

- Document production – including letters, reports, spreadsheets etc etc
- Proofreading and editing services
- Copywriting
- Desktop publishing – including newsletters, price lists, menus, flyers, brochures, advertising etc etc

- Bookkeeping – including preparation of BAS **IF** they're registered and meet ATO requirements
- Transcription services – digital, tape, shorthand
- Email response, including monitoring of email accounts either online or via remote access to client PCs
- Calendar management
- Function arrangement
- Travel – including booking flights, accommodation, rental cars etc
- Telephone answering services

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- Database set up and management
- Contacts management
- Mail outs – including fax and email
- Virtual office – if the client doesn't have an office of their own – including provision of email address, fax/phone and po box
- Internet research
- eBay purchases
- Article submissions to online resources
- Link exchange programs and other internet "relationship marketing"
- Web design and updating of sites



- Blog control - including set up and posting
- Forum moderation
- Web-conferencing and VoIP teleconferencing services
 - Onsite filing and office management (some – but not all – do this)
 - Association management
 - Presentation preparation – ie PowerPoint
 - Help Desk services
 - Training - software

Remember: If it's not on the list it doesn't mean it can't be done, so don't hesitate to contact us and ask if you don't see your requirement on the list!

"We provide the gift of time by providing professional virtual assistance to 21st Century professionals!"™

Email Scams - What to look out for

Last newsletter we talked about "phishing". Here are some points on how to protect yourself.

1. Stay calm. It's natural to be alarmed by an email claiming your account has been frozen or your credit card information has been stolen. Resist your first impulse to reply. Never follow the instructions in the email.
2. Keep your computer secure. Some frauds can lure you into opening an email or attachment that secretly installs a 'trojan' that allows scammers to monitor your computer and access your accounts. Install an effective virus protection program on your computer, and keep it up to date.
3. Get a 'firewall' to protect your computer from unauthorised access over the internet. This is especially important for broadband users.
4. Delete suspicious emails without opening them. Avoid opening dubious attachments, even if the email seems to come from a person or a company you trust.
5. Only go to the official website for your financial institution using your 'favourites' or by typing its URL in the address bar of your web browser. Never click any hyperlink in an email.



6. Regularly change your internet banking and shopping PINs.
7. Always suspect that

it's a scam if you're asked for your account details or your passwords by email. Your bank will never ask you for your account details or your passwords by email.

8. For Australian sites, look for the '.au' domain such as 'com.au' or 'net.au'. To date, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has not come across a phony .au site, although that doesn't guarantee it will never happen.
9. Take a few privacy precautions. Some authorities suggest avoiding personal transactions at internet cafes, community centres and libraries. In some places criminals have loaded software that records keystrokes.
10. Act quickly if you think you've been conned. If you get a suspicious email, contact your bank and they will confirm the email's authenticity. Do not respond to any contact details in the email.

For more information on financial tips and safety checks, visit www.fido.asic.gov.au

First OIVAC - & IVAD

The dust has finally settled on the inaugural Online International VA Convention and the first International VA Day - and what a success! With approximately 50 paid delegates, nearly 70 attendees at the IVAD celebrations, approximately 80 at the free networking events, and over 1400 unique visitors to the convention site, the 3 day event was a huge success!

We had 25 seminar sessions covering a range of industry-related topics such as: Niching, Working with International Clients, Web-Conferencing, Handling Difficult Clients, Branding, Search Engine Optimisation, Insurance, Thinking Like a Business Owner, How to Have Less Mess, Intellectual Property, Blogs, Media Relations,

Podcasting, How to be Truly Remote, and One Page Business Plans. The speakers were of exceptional quality and were either practicing Virtual Assistants or leaders in the topic field. There was a huge amount of information presented for both new and established VAs.



The virtual exhibition hall was a first, with visitors being able to browse virtual booths, pick up give aways and “talk” with exhibitors in manned booths.

As part of the Steering Committee, I was so pleased and proud to be involved in such a great event! We had a lot of volunteers too who helped out with registrations, the silent auction, IVAD celebrations, media and so much more.

Rob Anderson of Co-Op World in Melbourne provided the most amazing tech support during the event ... and given that the event ran at some strange hours local time, he went above and beyond the call - “thank you” just doesn’t seem to be enough for his dedication.

Feedback from participants has been unanimous - here’s just one testimonial I received:

“I was awstruck by the organisation of the conference and the level the world has reach in virtual space. One of the standout things for me was the training experience on the new technology. Rob ... was professional, patient and extremely competent with technical support issues. ... Very few people I have spoken to have ever heard of a Virtual Assistant and I think the conference will do a lot to correct that. For example, I was so taken with the software after my training session that I started telling people about it and showing it around. As a result, a friend of mine in training and seminars had me give her all the information on it that I could. I can easily see her using it with her own business for a myriad of applications. Thanks again for getting me involved, I have certainly grown from the experience.”

- David Beard, Coastsure Insurance Agency

As part of the IVAD celebrations two inaugural industry awards were presented:

The Thomas Leonard International VA of Distinction Award - Tom Leonard is credited with being the person who used the term virtual assistant as describing the person he worked with virtually. He is also the one who initially popularised it. He is the founder of Coach University, Coachville, the International Coach Federation, the International Association of Coaches and passed away in 2003. This award is to honour a Virtual Assistant who has been in business for at least 2 years and who has contributed to the industry in such a way that it has provided a positive impact on many others and helped them to build a successful business.



The Janet Jordan Achievement Award - Janet Jordan was a recognised industry leader in the virtual assistance field. Mrs Jordan’s virtual assisting career began in 1980, long before the term “Virtual Assistant” was coined. Along with running her private VA practices which included clients who spanned the globe, she also trained aspiring entrepreneurs to launch their own up-to-the-minute, compelling and relevant virtual assistant practices through Virtual Assistance U. She created future leaders in the VA industry. Janet passed away in January 2006. This award is to honour a newcomer Virtual Assistant who has been in business for less than 2 years and has reached a milestone in their short career in the industry. This milestone needs to be an accomplishment that has helped to boost their new business to an overwhelming success.

Congratulations to the winners: **Sharon Williams** (Thomas Leonard International VA of Distinction) and **Heather Jacobsen** (Janet Jordan Achievement Award)! Award details - and a list of nominees for each award - can be found here: <http://oivac.com/vadayawards.htm>

As the awards are going to be an annual event, nominations can be made by VAs or clients at the same URL.

Office Closure

Just a quick reminder that our office will be closed - for the first time in 4 years! - for the week:

19 August to 27 August inclusive.

We decided it was time to take the family away and will be celebrating my turning 40 by spending the week in Vanuatu ... where we had our Honeymoon all those years ago! Can’t wait!

If you need to make arrangements with us for continuity of service please do so now as email will NOT be checked during this time.



Networking Excellence

If You Are Not Having Fun, You Are Not Doing it Right

By Robyn Henderson

Talking to strangers ranks in the top 5 things that people hate to do. And to think of actually having fun whilst talking to strangers may be a definite stretch of your imagination. Recall the last party that you went to and picture those people in the room, who just seemed to be able to talk to anyone about anything. Just what is their secret and how come they even look like they are enjoying themselves? Is it possible for you to become a more interesting person this year and even have fun talking to total strangers? The answer is most definitely YES!!

TIP 1 - Interesting people are interested in others

They actually take the focus off themselves and put it onto the person/s they are speaking to. Interesting people are great listeners - they work at improving their listening skills every day.

Whilst waiting for a delayed flight, I once had a 20-minute conversation with a businessman. During that time, I spoke less than 50 words to him, as I asked about his work, family, last holiday and his next holiday. This interesting man chatted away in response to my questions, never once using my name or asking me a question. As his flight was called, he looked at my business card (obviously to get my name as he had not used it once) and said, "Robyn, you would have to be one of the most interesting people I have ever met". Interesting or *interested*? Master networkers know that they can learn much more from listening than they can from speaking.

TIP 2 - Spend a week observing great communicators in your social and business networks

What makes them different? You may observe that they:

- Listen to your answer
- Allow you to finish your response without interrupting
- Make eye contact
- Genuinely act as if they do care about your answer
- Somehow make you feel special
- Follow up when they say they will
- Often offer helpful suggestions to you, but not in a know-it-all fashion
- Can often remember snippets of previous conversations you may have had with them

Great communicators work at their conversations. They focus on you, not the person standing behind you. The good news is that everything they do, you can choose to do too.

TIP 3 - Act as if everyone in the room, stranger or not, is a VIP - a very interesting person

Good communicators have a belief system that every single person that they meet is incredibly interesting and

has much to contribute to any conversation. An interesting person will almost always have a couple of open-ended questions prepared, eg:

- What was the highlight of your day/weekend/holiday?
- What tips would you give someone who has never attended one of these events before?
- What's your opinion of ...?
- What do you like most about your profession?
- What's your favourite restaurant, movie, sport?
- Your ... looks great, do you mind me asking where you bought it?
- Are you XXXX (city) born and bred?
- How did you get your start in the widget business?
- What tips would you give someone entering your profession?

"Act like the host and not the guest"

"Great communicators ... focus on you, not the person standing behind you."

Once the conversation starts, it generally flows, when you focus on making that heart to heart connection - and really listening to the responses and of course their questions. Treat the person standing in front of you as if they were the most important person in the room.

TIP 4 - Act like the host and not the guest

The key to making connections is basically that you are treating people the way you would like to be treated. If a stranger walked into the room, what would they be hoping someone in the room would do? Befriend them of course.

So the next time you see a person standing alone and possibly looking a little nervous or out of place, talk to them. "Hi, my name is Robyn, mind if I join you?" Or even better, catch their eye and invite them to join your group. They rarely decline your offer, why would they?

TIP 5 - Practice, Practice, Practice

If talking to strangers still sounds a little bit daunting, take heart. Every day aim to have a quality heart to heart connection, even for only 60 seconds, with someone who crosses your path. Maybe it will be the newsagent, the garage attendant, bank teller, supermarket check out operator - basically any stranger you come into contact with. Ask a general question and listen to their answer with your heart, not your head. Then see how easily the conversation flows.

Don't be surprised if pretty soon you are receiving compliments about being a great conversationalist and most importantly, you will also find yourself having fun.



For more information on Robyn Henderson:

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email robyn@networkingtowin.com.au or phone 07-55230123

NEW SERVICE: Web-Conferencing

ANNOUNCING A NEW & VALUABLE SERVICE TO OUR CLIENTS: VoIP ENABLED WEB-CONFERENCING!

If you currently work with groups dispersed over great distances, need to get together for regular meetings, or use teleconferencing as your meeting solution, this is a cheaper and much more effective alternative! The space is also useful for speakers, coaches or trainers wanting to provide online presentations, training or coaching sessions. Imagine presenting your sales pitch to interstate or overseas prospects in this environment - without the financial and time expenditure of travel, accommodation and sustenance.

We offer two options:

Option 1:

Purchase your own web-conferencing room.

Option 2:

Use our hosted room.

Option 1 would suit those clients who have a regular need for a web-conferencing space and want to look after administration of the area themselves.

If you're interested in this option, go to the following link and order your room at the foot of the page:

<http://co-opworld.com/member/56468?webconf2>

If you would like us to look after moderation and recording of your meeting, this service would be provided at our standard hourly rate.

Option 2 would suit those clients who don't want to worry about monthly administration of a room and want us to look after everything for them. Moderation and recording of the meeting is provided with this option at a significantly reduced rate.

The image below is an example of the web-conferencing space - a 3-part window with a text chat box area, the names of participants beneath this, and the presentation window, where PowerPoint presentations are loaded or URLs are pushed.

Contact us for more information, a demonstration of the room, or for a schedule of room rates :
+617-3375-5613; mobile 0417648172 or email lyn@execstress.com

