

Executive Stress

OFFICE SUPPORT

Newsletter — March 2004

Welcome!

Volume 4, Issue 1

Happy New Year! I hope it was fun and memorable, however you chose to celebrate it! I think the next time my husband and I stay up till midnight will be when we're waiting for our daughter to get home!! :)



The new working year is back in full swing, and it's been a very busy three months for our household!

We purchased a house which settled in February, and there was a flurry of activity with minor renovations in the three weeks that followed. Then the moving..... Need I say more? My life is boxes! On the positive side, I now have a dedicated office - located in what we have affectionately dubbed "The Bunker" (under the house), with its own telephone line and ADSL! You should have received an updated vCard with all the details - if not, let me know and I'll send you one. My office tel/fax number has changed to **07-3375-5613**. All other details remain pretty much the same.



Ceilidh also started pre-school this year so she is now only with me on a Wednesday. She settled in easily - for anyone who knows her, what else

would you expect?! It's been a steep learning curve for me though, adjusting to school routines and the year being broken up into Terms! I can't believe it's happened so quickly! But I also feel very blessed that I was able to spend as much time as I could with her in these first five years. Did I just say "**five years**"???

In addition to domestic changes, I negotiated with a colleague to provide continuity of service for her clients when she closed her practice in January. So that has meant a bit of expansion! I tossed up the idea of actually taking over office space in the city, but the beauty of being a *Virtual Assistant* is that I don't have the same overheads as traditional businesses - and moving to the city would have meant a move away from being truly "virtual".

Marketing has been a focus for this first few months, with a local feature on *Women in Business* including eSOS. We've also ventured into the world of radio advertising on a community radio station, which has been an eye-opening and fun experience!

This newsletter we look at programs

Inside this issue:

Programs Slow to Open?	2
New Clients	2
Referral Policy	2
How you know you're living in Queensland	3
Office XP SP3	3
Working with a VA - What's in it for YOU?	3

that are slow to open and what could be the cause, a recent warning on upgrading to Service Pack 3 for Office XP users, and a reminder on what's in it for you when you partner with a Virtual Assistant.

There's also a humorous look at how you know you're living in Queensland - as we finally see the mercury drop to more acceptable - and liveable - levels!

Till next quarter!
Lyn P-B ✓

There is no such thing as can't, only won't. If you're qualified, all it takes is a burning desire to accomplish, to make a change.

- Jan Ashford

Disclaimer: Articles in this newsletter are for information purposes only. Readers should make their own enquiries before implementing any of the information contained herein. Neither eSOS nor Lyn Prowse-Bishop shall be held responsible for any loss or damage caused by following the information in any article contained herein.

Programs Slow to Open?

Have you noticed your programs - such as Word and Access - slow to open lately? It could be your Norton's Antivirus program.

According to the Norton's site, it seems that with NAV installed and the Auto-Protect extension enabled, you could notice word processing and database applications are slower to open. This occurs on systems using the 603 processor.

According to Norton's the solution, after ensuring all components of these programs are updated to the most current available versions, is:

1. Launch NAV.
2. Choose Prevention from the Preferences menu.
3. Under Monitor Virus-like Activities, choose None.
4. Click Save.
5. Quit NAV.

If the problem persists, use these steps:

1. Launch NAV.
2. Choose Scan from the Preferences menu.
3. Deselect "Scan for known viruses when files are opened and applications are launched".
4. Click Save.
5. Quit NAV.

I don't know about you, but I'm a bit reluctant to turn scanning off under any circumstances! And I couldn't find any of this in my version of NAV: V8.07.17C. Not real useful!

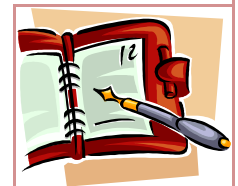
Some colleagues found the following actually sped things up again (if you're running V8):

1. Launch NAV.
2. Click Options.
3. Under the 'Other' box, click 'Miscellaneous'.
4. Remove the check mark beside 'Enable Office Plug-in'.
5. Click OK.
6. Quit NAV. ✓

New Clients

The following new clients benefited from partnering with eSOS during the last three months, and we welcome and thank them for partnering with us!

- † d'Scriptive Words, Qld (Proofreading)
- † Ann Day, Qld (Letters)
- † SEQLD Surveillance Services, Qld (Document Preparation)
- † D Byrnes, Church of Latterday Saints, Qld (Meeting Transcription - digital)
- † Roland Smith, B2B Developments, Qld (Document Production)



Referral Policy

Have you benefited from a partnership with eSOS? Do you know somebody who could also benefit?

Don't forget our referral policy! Clients are **rewarded** every time they refer new paying clients to eSOS by receiving a discount off their next invoice.



Having trouble convincing a colleague that a VA is perfect for them? We'd be happy to provide you with a presentation on CD on the benefits of partnering with a VA. And we are more than happy to meet with prospects face to face to help them better understand **what's in it for them!** Just give us a call or drop an email to lyn@execstress.com. Working with a VA is a partnership! Help us to help you and your associates! ✓

How You Know You're Living in Queensland

As summer in the Southern Hemisphere draws to a close, here's a reminder of what we've been through, and what's in store next summer for those of us living in Queensland!

How You Know You're Living in Queensland:



- The best parking place is determined by shade instead of distance.
- Hot water now comes out of both taps.
- You learn that a seat belt buckle makes a pretty good branding iron.
- The temperature drops below 30C (85F) and you feel a little chilly.
- You discover that in February it only takes 2 fingers to steer your car.
- You discover that you can get sunburned through your car window.
- You develop a fear of metal car door handles.
- You break a sweat the instant you step outside at 7:30 a.m.
- Your biggest bicycle wreck fear is: "What if I get knocked out and end up lying on the pavement and cook to death?"
- You realise that asphalt has a liquid state.
- Farmers are feeding their chickens crushed ice to keep them from laying hard-boiled eggs.
- The cows are giving evaporated milk.
- The trees are whistling for the dogs. ✓

Office XP SP3 - Danger Will Robinson!

If you're running Office XP you might be tempted to install Service Pack 3. Woody Leonard of *Woody's Office Watch* (subscribe at: <http://www.woodyswatch.com/office/index.asp>), advises users to make sure that they get the necessary updates to other software before rushing out to install this latest offering.

"The Service Pack contains mostly security updates and includes anything in previous service packs or updates. All of that is a good thing however the Pack was not widely circulated around the developer community before release. This means that some Office add-ins, notably anti-spam features for Outlook 2002, won't work anymore.



"We know that I Hate Spam and Junk-Out have both been updated to cope with SP3, so if you have an anti-spam package with Outlook 2002 you might want to ensure that it is compatible before getting SP3."

Apparently it's not only spam programs that are affected. Online meeting software WebEx also apparently has trouble with SP3.

Once more is known we'll pass on a better picture of how and when to update to Office XP, SP3. ✓

Working with a VA - What's in it for YOU?

Many of my clients lament that they find it difficult to convince colleagues that partnering with a Virtual Assistant is in the best interests of their business. Many people have difficulty even grasping the concept of a remote assistant, so it is not surprising that understanding the benefits poses a problem. So what are the benefits, **what's in it for you** and who would benefit from the partnership?

Think about this: You're a sole operator or independent professional/executive in need of professional, confidential admin support, but don't want to go to the expense and hassle involved in hiring your own staff. Or you don't have the space for staff, or necessary expertise to complete a particular job. What do you do?

Working with a VA - What's in it for YOU? (contd)

(Continued from page 3)

And this is a scenario that many businesses can relate to: Your best office support staff member goes off on maternity leave or extended vacation. You believe your only alternative is to hire an expensive and unmotivated temp - right?

Think again! Virtual Assistants (VAs), also known as Virtual Office Professionals or Virtual Business Associates, provide an alternative, cost-effective staffing solution for businesses of all sizes, including sole operators. They are **not** temps, but small business operators with a vested interest in their clients' success.



VAs provide profound cost-saving benefits to the businesses and individuals they partner with, and have an important role to play in today's business environment, as they form a large part of the growing trend towards home-based business.

VAs can perform the same services as office-based employees but without the associated costs such as payroll tax, worker's compensation, superannuation, sick and other leave, or training. There are no equipment costs as VAs utilise their own equipment, and there are none of the associated costs of wear and tear, office space, lighting, power, telephone and so on.

In addition, the VA is available out of normal hours, on weekends, and public holidays. How much do you lose, both in monetary terms and in terms of productivity, on office politics and staff chatting in the coffee room? Clients pay only for time on task when they partner with a VA so there is no time/money lost on these typical office behaviours.

VAs **partner** with clients, which means that a longer term relationship can develop in much the same way as one would with an onsite personal assistant - yet clients do not have the associated costs of an employee.

So why wouldn't you just use a temporary staffing agency to "fill the gaps" in your administrative support needs? Temps do not always offer the most cost effective solutions for clients as on-costs are still factored into the hourly rate by the agency. In addition, when clients partner with a VA they get **consistency of support** - not a different person each time they need assistance, necessitating training of each new temp in their business procedures. The VA has a **vested interest** in helping clients succeed in their own business goals - a temp does not have the same interest.

Serviced offices have their own disadvantages - the most common being that clients pay for services they may not really need, for example meeting space, stationery and the like. One client pointed out to me that he had to "pay for every pen borrowed".

VAs offer a wide variety of office support services including secretarial support, personal and executive assistance, word processing, database management, transcription services, mail outs, bookkeeping, web design, desktop publishing, presentations, spreadsheets, and office services such as faxing, email and scanning. Clients have access to specialist skills that may not be available through a temp agency or serviced office, and access to latest technologies including web-based conferencing, online calendar and document sharing and project collaboration, real time chat and digital transcription services.

With clients across three States of Australia, and both coasts of the continental USA, I rarely see my clients. But with the technology available today including email, fax, instant messaging services, digital transcription technology, and internet-based file sharing facilities, I'm as close to my clients as if I was in the next room.



So doesn't that mean that being a VA is as easy as knowing how to type and "drive" a PC? A colleague recently described it best: "The myth is that **anyone** can be a virtual assistant. Being a VA is more than just 'proclaiming' I am a VA, logging on to a computer and creating a web site. Professional VAs transition years of office administration, experience and specialisation from a corporate setting to running their own successful business. Those experiences can include enrolment in advanced training courses, managing offices and supervising large numbers of personnel - all while acting as the assistant to the owner. Others had responsibility for local area networks (LANs), creating and maintaining corporate web sites, planning major events, etc. These are just a few examples of qualifications that help make a VA a 'professional'."

For more information on how a professional VA can help you and your business, contact eSOS on **0417-648172** or email lyn@execstress.com. We have a "first hour free" policy for new contract clients.

For your **free** digital voice recording software, log onto our website at <http://www.execstress.com> and start enjoying the benefits of partnering with a professional VA today! ✓

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"Professional Assistance for the 21st Century Professional!"

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