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# 10 Sure-Fire Strategies for Marketing Your VA Business



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# Introduction

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*"The One Who Markets the Best Wins".*

I have seen it often, especially in the Internet Realm: A certain product achieves amazing success and profits - not because it has the best and most innovative features but as a result of the company's ability to unleash well-executed and cutting edge marketing strategies that set them apart from the competition.

The same principle applies to aspiring or existing Virtual Assistance Business owners like yourself - effective marketing practices enable you to further your exposure, win more clients and ultimately grow your VA business to new heights!

Over the past months, our team at [VAClassroom.com](http://VAClassroom.com) has spent a great deal of time connecting with Virtual Assistants. We reviewed their websites and marketing strategies extensively. We discovered that a good majority of these businesses were clearly not as effective and innovative as they could be in marketing their Virtual Assistant Businesses.

Certainly, a few VA businesses stood out from the pack. Those businesses definitely made my "potential hire" list because of their creative and diverse marketing strategies.

The best way to describe the key distinction between these particular Virtual Assistants and the rest was their adoption of an "Internet Marketers Mindset" when promoting their businesses.

New and existing Virtual Assistants must think like "Internet Marketers" for a couple key reasons:

1. They will likely be working for Internet Businesses involved in Internet Marketing. These clients appreciate a VA that employs good IM strategies!
2. VAs are also Internet Business Owners just like any other Internet Marketer selling a web product or service. They need to employ online marketing strategies to expand online exposure and business opportunities.

This guide will cover 10 Sure-Fire Marketing Strategies to consider for your Virtual Assistant Business. If you are at the beginning of your Virtual Assistance career, then this will serve as a good starting point for building effective marketing strategies to get the word out there about your new business.

For those Virtual Assistants who have been actively working in the field for some time, a few of these strategies and ideas help to take your marketing and business exposure to the next level.

## STRATEGY #1: Create a Professional, Compelling and User-Friendly Website

Now, I don't know about you, but as an Internet Marketer, I quickly form a first impression of a website within seconds of my visit. That impression determines whether I stay or move to the next site.

US Market Research Firm [Marketingsherpa.com](http://Marketingsherpa.com) reports that, on average, **"50% of Search Engine visitors bail from a website within zero to eight seconds!"**

I honestly think that statistic is even faster for savvy Internet Business Owners searching for a Virtual Assistant. These individuals tend to be more judgemental when visiting a new site than the average consumer.

A few factors usually determine whether a visitor stays or bails on a Virtual Assistant's website:

### 1. Is the design professional or amateurish?

In surfing many different Virtual Assistance websites, some sites came across as a bit "home-grown". They had heavy text, spelling errors, page formatting issues and confusing navigation. As a business owner, I'm always looking for new Virtual Assistants to hire. The low quality and less professional sites raised some questions on whether I could trust this person with key projects and tasks for my business.

If you plan to market your business effectively as the "crème de la crème" of the VA industry, then it is imperative to have a professional website appeal that speaks to your credibility as a "Superstar Virtual Assistant"!

### 2. Is the layout or navigation confusing or unclear?

In this Web 2.0 world we live in, a level of simplicity is evident among many of the popular Web 2.0 sites such as [www.37signals.com](http://www.37signals.com) and [www.simplyhired.com](http://www.simplyhired.com). They present clear navigation and straightforward headlines in a simple, user-friendly format.

Now, I am not suggesting that you copy these examples, but take note of the simplicity and easy-to-read layout these sites provide. Make it naturally easy for users to navigate your site content and pages.

### 3. Are the graphics or images relevant to the site content? Is there generic "feel-good" stuff unrelated to the prospective client?

It is certainly beneficial to add images to the site that resonate with the audience you are targeting and that are relevant to your business.

I am often mystified by sites that seem to plop an irrelevant image in a prime location on their homepage. These often seem to serve no real purpose other than filling up space. If you are not able to find a relevant image that really adds value to your site image, then I recommend simply doing without one.

## STRATEGY #1: Create a Professional, Compelling and User-Friendly Website

Now, I hate to pick on any one site, but one website offers an example of a less-than-optimal use of images: <http://www.virtualaccuracy.com> I commend the site for its copy, as it is very clear and well written. But the paper-clipped "business" card, big pen and birds' eye view of the coffee cup need to go.

From a person that hires a fair amount of virtual staff, these images overshadow the great content and as a result, I moved on to the next VA site.

### 4. Is the wording in the headline clear, compelling and directly selling the benefit of your Virtual Assistant Services?

It is important to have either a key tagline in your header or a headline below your header, that clearly sells the benefit of your site and service and ultimately prompt your prospective clients to read on. I recommend headlines in a different color, like maroon, red or another sharper color, so that they stand out from the rest of your content.

In researching many Virtual Assistant websites, I came across a few fabulous headlines or taglines. Kudos to the VA for effectively drawing my attention. Check out these ones:

**"Giving Business Owners Freedom by Managing the BS, etc..."** - <http://www.bsetc.ca>

That's a brilliant play on words and very compelling!

**"Committed to Assist you Virtually Anywhere"** - <http://www.ultimatebizassistant.com>

This speaks to an accessible and versatile resource for my business!

A powerful headline can be the determining factor for a visitor to read on or move along to the next site.

### 5. Is the Website content readable and relevant?

It is important to use good font size (at least a 10-11) so that the user does not have to strain his or her eyes or exert any extra energy reading your content.

By nature, Internet users are "skimmers" and "scanners". It's ideal to include shorter paragraphs, bullet points and to highlight or bold key phrases for further emphasis.

Your headline and supporting copy should clearly answer the WIIFM (What's In It for Me) question. You want to communicate the selling benefits of your services effectively as opposed to just describing what you do. Here's an example:

# STRATEGY #1: Create a Professional, Compelling and User-Friendly Website

## Feature:

Blog Commenting and Forum Marketing

## Selling Benefit:

Represent a voice for your company in relevant blogs and forums so you can focus on your priority tasks.

See the difference? This example shows the key distinction between descriptive web copy and marketing copy. This selling benefit clearly communicates to the client that he or she will save time and be able to do more by outsourcing this task.

## 6. Is the website conversion friendly?

In other words, do the layout, headline, images and copy move a prospective client towards a specific action? This action might be opting into your newsletter or a free report on "How to have a clutter-free work life". You might also provide other compelling enticers like a contest or special seasonal VA bonus package.

It is important to employ various tactics to engage prospective customers such as using a live chat tool like "[Live Person](#)" to connect with visitors immediately while they are viewing your site.

Think over these points and the questions therein. They're worthwhile to ensure that you are providing the most compelling website experience for your visitors.

Here is a quick summary of some key web design elements to consider for a winning website:

- Visible logo typically at the top left of the page.
- Compelling headline that is clear and concise. It possesses "The Hook" that draws users to look further.
- Bulleted features and selling benefits - they should answer the WIIFM question.
- Effective use of testimonies - they should be very visible on your home page.
- Easy-to-follow navigation and links.
- Relevant images - ensure the file size has been optimized so it doesn't affect website load times.
- Keyword-rich web content
- Clear call to action - the special promotions, opt-in boxes for your newsletters and "Contact Us" buttons should be easy to find!

## STRATEGY # 2: Create a WordPress Blog

Creating a blog for your website and VA business is a sure-fire way of igniting visitor traffic and search engine results.

I recommend setting up a WordPress blog rather than one of the hosted options like Blogger. I personally believe a well-designed, branded blog hosted on your own domain adds more credibility. It's a good business presence to have!

While blogging does require some investment in time and effort, it offers some powerful benefits that are hard to overlook, such as:

- Faster indexing by search engines. The major SEs love blogs that constantly provide fresh and relevant content! I am always amazed at how quickly search traffic from Google and Yahoo starts coming to my blog from a post I wrote just an hour earlier. Now, keep in mind, it does take some time and about 20-30 blog posts before the search engines really start picking up your blog posts. Over time, you'll notice nice traffic increases to your blog and site.
- Presenting yourself as an authority to prospective clients. A blog allows you to set yourself up as an expert or authority on particular topics that may be of interest to prospective clients. For example, you might write blog posts on productivity tips, timesaving business tools, or creating a stress-free work-life. Internet Business owners like myself might find these posts appealing. So, the key to a successful blog is to write content that appeals to the audience you target. I recently came across one Virtual Assistant's blog that impressed me with her content and the overall design that I immediately made note of her contact details as a potential VA I would like to hire in the future.
- Creating an ideal avenue for meaningful dialogue with prospective clients. The beauty of blogging is facilitating two-way communication with your audience as they share feedback and comments on your blog posts. That allows valuable dialogue and a natural way to connect with prospective clients who may be interested in your specific VA skills and services.

Recently, I have seen more Virtual Assistants setting up a blogsite. Their WordPress Blog also functions as their website for highlighting their services. If you do not have a VA website or are not pleased with your current one, you might definitely consider setting up a blog site. It is very cost-effective and allows you to "kill two birds with one stone" by creating relevant content and promoting your specific services. Check out [ithemes.com](http://ithemes.com) for some of the compelling blogsite designs that you can choose.

The beauty of blogsites is that you can easily change content, add videos and podcasts, or incorporate RSS feeds and other elements to enhance your online presence further. A custom-design WordPress blog, complete with header, logo, design and all the necessary plug-ins typically costs less than \$500 US. With a little training, you can manage and maintain your blog updates independently.

## STRATEGY # 2: Create a WordPress Blog

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Here are a couple of examples of WordPress blogsites from top Virtual Assistants:

<http://www.bcetc.ca>

<http://www.ultimatebizassistant.com>

<http://www.vadiva.com>

Both these blogs provide quality content and present the VAs as experts in their field, which goes a long way to winning new clients and growing income opportunities.

To help get you started, here are a few "quick-and-dirty" tips for effective blogging:

1. Write content relevant to the audience you target. Make sure you write "stuff" your prospective clients would like to know. (Ie. Top 10 Productivity Tips at Work)
2. Use specific keywords in your blog titles and post in order to drive targeted traffic through search engines. I recommend using a tool like [www.wordtracker.com](http://www.wordtracker.com) to find keywords that your prospective clients use in searches. Build content around those keywords.
3. Use proper keyword tags to place your blog posts in the right categories within blog networks such as Technorati.com. If you are new to tagging, don't worry; we cover that in great detail in our upcoming Internet Marketing VA course.
4. Be sure to submit your blog posts regularly to social media news and bookmark sites like [Digg.com](http://Digg.com) and [Delicious](http://Delicious.com). Regular social media submission further increases search ranking and traffic to your blog. You can use free tools like [SocialMarker.com](http://SocialMarker.com) to mass submit blog posts to many popular social media sites.
5. Write a minimum of 2-3 blog posts per week in order to build a rapport with your audience and to keep the search engines happy.

If you are new to the whole blogging thing and would like to learn more, I recommend tuning in to [ProBlogger.net](http://ProBlogger.net) on a regular basis. The site offers excellent tips and strategies for maximizing blog potential.

## STRATEGY #3: Join Relevant Social and Business Network Sites and Discussion Forums.

In a previous career, I was a Career Counsellor. This was back in the 90s before [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) came along. The main advice I used to give job seekers was to "network, network, network".

I encouraged job seekers to join the Chamber of Commerce and other business associations, as well as attend social business functions. These networking activities helped build relationships with employers and businesses the individuals might be interested in working for.


In the Web 2.0 world, networking has reached a completely new level, with the ability to mass connect with peers and prospective employers across states, borders and continents via online business and social networks.

Your active participation in some key online social networks will enable you to:

- Build collaborative relationships with your VA peers in order to share new ideas, strategies and tips that will definitely help your business
- Connect with small and medium Internet Business owners (who could be potential clients)
- Keep "in the know" on industry-related topics, events, etc
- Become a regular contributor to some key social networks to build trust and credibility.

While "Social Networking" can be a time-consuming process, it also serves as an ideal avenue for connecting with prospective clients and allows you to promote your virtual assistant skills and services naturally.

New social news sites and online business forums continue to emerge every day. Here are a few that I recommend connecting with if you haven't already.

 This one is a must. There are so many industry-specific groups to plug into in the ebusiness and Internet Marketing space. For example, you might join this "[Internet Business Development](#)" group (560 members) made up of Internet Businesses looking to improve their marketing strategies. Not only would you likely learn a lot about marketing but also you come into direct contact with 560 potential clients!

I also recommend connecting with the VA groups on Facebook, as there is also a growing trend of multi-VA businesses. You might find new work opportunities through a Virtual Assistant firm. For the most part, though, spend time in the Facebook groups that include your prospective clients, such as Internet Business, small and home biz and related groups.

Facebook allows you to create a nice branded business page complete with your logo and a blurb on your service offerings - free advertising!

## STRATEGY #3: Join Relevant Social and Business Network Sites and Discussion Forums.



[Ryze](#) is a rising star in the online business networking realm. It's an ideal channel for VAs to network and build relationships with small and medium Internet Business owners.

Some larger popular groups, such as Woman Business Owners and Small Business Think Tanks, are an awesome base to connect with and target clients. Ryze offers a free membership and is well worth the time to get you and your business in front of the right audience!



[LinkedIn](#) currently remains the largest online business networking site on the Web. It has an enormous base of prospective clients for connections. It is essential to set up a nice professional profile on Linked-in that effectively highlights your experience, skills and qualifications.

LinkedIn also offers a HTML button you can add to your website or blog that displays "View my LinkedIn Profile". Adding this button to your VA site or blog conveys credibility and portrays a web-savvy VA who knows how to network his or her business online! A search for "Virtual Assistants" on LinkedIn lists some of the top Virtual Assistants and VA firms. I recommend perusing a few of those to see how they present themselves.

In addition, LinkedIn has a cool "Questions and Answers" feature. You can post questions to get answers or answer questions from other members. This is a great avenue for becoming known and building good rapport with prospective clients.

While preparing for the launch of VAclassroom.com, I posted this question on the LinkedIn Q&A board: "What is on your VA Wishlist?" I wanted to see what tasks businesses were currently seeking to outsource so that I could integrate them into our training courses and modules. I was impressed to see a few Virtual Assistants respond with quality answers and a natural plug for their own business. I immediately made note of those VAs as potential hires in the future.

If you do not have a LinkedIn account, [sign up](#) and be sure to invite all your business colleagues and friends to start building a network.

[Cre8aSite](#), [Warrior](#) and [WebmasterWorld Forums](#) - These three popular Internet Business and marketing forums are the largest and most recognized on the Net. While there may be many threads and discussion topics outside your expertise, there are some general business and marketing forums where people discuss Virtual Assistant topics.

The whole purpose of signing up for these forums is to position your business in the right place at the right time so you can connect with the right audience. This kind of social marketing initiative most certainly gives you a competitive edge.

## STRATEGY #3: Join Relevant Social and Business Network Sites and Discussion Forums.

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If you are an experienced VA, you are likely active in the [VANetworking forum](#). It is probably the largest and most comprehensive networking forum for discussing new ideas, VA business marketing strategies and job referral opportunities. It's worthwhile to connect here.

We expand on Social Marketing Strategies in detail in our "Digital Job Search Strategies" module of the Internet Marketing VA Training Course.

## STRATEGY #4: Blog and Forum Marketing

Commenting on targeted blogs and forums is a powerful social marketing strategy to gain good exposure with the "right" audience for your business. I have personal experience in the great benefits of joining the conversation with industry-specific blogs and forum threads to build rapport and credibility with prospective clients.

Here are a few key reasons you might consider investing time to comment on blogs and forums:

- Your ongoing participation in specific blog and forum comment sections helps you be recognized and trusted by prospective clients.
- Naturally inserting a link in your comment lets you receive a nice stream of targeted one-way links. These improve search listings and rankings for your respective site or blog.
- You improve your overall site traffic - I am always amazed at the steady stream of traffic I receive from just a few comments at one blog with decent volume.
- You'll find plenty of opportunities to promote your business naturally.

Prior to year's end, I wrote a blog post entitled "What is on your VA Wishlist for 2008?" I wanted to find out what specific tasks or skills Internet businesses were looking to delegate to a virtual assistant.

I received a number of quality comments from Virtual Assistants who appreciated the post and naturally discussed their own business without forcing a sales pitch.

I had also mentioned that I hoped my wife would put a new VA under the Christmas tree that year. Some VAs commented that they were running Christmas special discounts for their services. I ended up corresponding back and forth with a few VAs, built a rapport, and made note of them as potential hires in the future.

Consider the effect of commenting and the potential it offers for new business opportunities! As an Internet Marketer, Virtual Assistants who use current marketing strategies in their business always impress me - these are the kind of people who myself and many other Internet business owners are looking to hire!

## STRATEGY #4: Blog and Forum Marketing

Here are a few quick and easy steps for establishing a "Blog and Forum Marketing" strategy for your business. We expand on these techniques in the Internet Marketing VA Training Course.

### 1. Start with Google Alerts and News Tracking Tools

Go to [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts) and enter specific keywords you would like to track, such as "Virtual Assistants". Google then sends you email alerts on any blog post, new articles or other new content that references this term.

Google Alerts are also a great way of keeping in tune with what is happening in your respective industry based on specific keywords.

I also recommend checking out these tools that help you stay in the loop on industry-related topics.

- [Google Blog Search](#)
- [Board Tracker](#)
- [Board Reader](#)
- [Digg](#)

I personally use Google Alerts, Google Blog Search and Digg the most. They let me connect with blogs and forums where I may be interested in commenting.

### 2. Build a list of 15-20 industry-specific blogs and forums.

Once you start using Google Blog Search and other tools, you begin to recognize the particular bloggers that you would like to follow. They focus on your industry or have the exact type of web business audience you seek to target as potential clients. It is important not to make your list of good places to comment too large, though. You'll have a difficult time tracking and contributing to the discussion across all of them.

### 3. Compile your Blog list in Google Reader or another RSS Feed Reader

If you are not currently using a Feed Reader, I recommend heading over to <http://www.google.com/reader> to compile a list of RSS feeds. Simply add the feed URL to the reader. It looks like this: <http://feeds.feedburner/esalesguru>. This enables you to quickly access your blogs and give the latest posts a quick review.

If you are using Outlook 2007, they have a built-in RSS Feed Reader that I also find particularly handy.

## STRATEGY #4: Blog and Forum Marketing

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### 4. Start making informed comments.

It is important never to seem like a "pushy sales person" in your comments. This could result in some negative publicity. It is important to build rapport, make appropriate and informative comments and look for natural opportunities to talk about your business tactfully. Social Marketing is most certainly a paradigm-shift from conventional direct marketing strategies - it's much more relationship-focused! We cover "The Fine Art of Blog Commenting" in our Internet Marketing VA training course.

### 5. Be sure to add your Website URL to your signature.

Add your website or blog URL address in your comments. It results in nice one-way links back to your site or blog and ultimately improves your ranking and listings in the major Search Engines like Google and Yahoo.

## STRATEGY #5: Creating Viral Videos

One of the biggest Internet Marketing trends of 2007 was the proliferation of viral videos to create a buzz and successful word-of-mouth campaigns. Experts predict that the use of video marketing will continue to experience meteoric growth in 2008 and beyond.

So what does that have to do with your new or existing VA business? Quite a bit, actually...

- Videos offer an innovative medium to present the selling benefits of your business in a way that brings out your personality, top-notch skills and abilities. No corporate mumbo-jumbo, please!
- Videos become a mini digital marketing message for your business as you syndicate it through targeted channels in [YouTube](#) and other popular video-sharing sites. Videos are quickly becoming the web's fastest means of transmitting information and content!
- Videos bring "YOU" to the forefront. They get you out from behind your website. They also allow prospective clients to learn more about you and assess whether you are the type of person they prefer. It is almost a resume "in action"!
- Videos allow you to engage prospective clients in a personalized and creative way that complements your existing website content.
- Videos are an easy "calling card" to pass to prospective businesses you would like to work with. You can simply drop them an email with your contact information and YouTube Link to your viral video. As an employer, I would much rather watch a two-minute video than read through a long email or content-heavy website. Videos give me the straight goods on who you are and how can you help me take my business to the next level.

If your business audience is Internet Marketers and other Internet Business Entrepreneurs who understand the value and power of viral videos, then why not use strategies they endorse to gain credibility and enhance your image as a savvy, cutting-edge Virtual Assistant!

Here are some of the best places to share your videos:

- Video Sharing Sites like Youtube, Metacafe, etc...
- Your business blog (or vlog)
- Homepage (above the fold on the first visible screen)
- Services Marketplace Profiles. [Elance](#), for example, allows you to upload YouTube videos right to your profile.
- Social and Business Network Profiles (Linkedin, Ryze, Facebook etc..)

## STRATEGY #5: Creating Viral Videos

Here are some success strategies to create effective viral videos:

1. **Be YOURSELF!** It is essential not to over-professionalize yourself so that you come across as a robot devoid of all personality. Be honest with who you are and what you bring to the "VA Table". I have watched many You Tube videos, and the ones that always catch my eye are those that are more casual and "real" as opposed to stuffy and corporate. We are virtual workers, for goodness sake - save the dry videos for the "corporate zombies"!
2. **Do your best to keep your marketing videos relatively short and concise (under two or three minutes).** Most Internet Business owners have large workloads and tons of competing priorities. They likely don't have a lot of time to watch lengthy videos, so quick and snappy is the key!
3. **Be creative and try to "stand out from the pack".** If I was to review videos from VAs I was considering hiring, I would be looking for something memorable. If a VA is simply reciting the skills and services already listed on the website, then I might quickly lose interest and move on.

Some creative ideas to consider:

- Do a mini-tutorial on a topic that might interest your prospective clients (like the Top 10 time-saving applications of 2008)
- Have a screencast demo (using tools like [Camtasia](#)) that show you performing a specific task you would do for businesses (such as submitting a blog post through SocialMarker.com or showing some tools that you use to research and recruit good affiliates for your clients). This is a creative and memorable way of tangibly highlighting your skills and services! In this instance, you might get away with a slightly longer video.
- Make a humorous video on some VA bloopers that WON'T HAPPEN if they hire you!
- Give them your best David Letterman "Top 10 Reasons How You (and your VA business) will help alleviate stress from their work life in 2008".

The key here is to think outside the box. Use video to creatively express yourself and catch your prospective client's attention for the right reasons.

Don't make a wild and crazy video that ends up being passed around the Internet - that is negative publicity that you do not want! Just be creative, memorable and look for innovative ways to display your skills and services.

## STRATEGY #5: Creating Viral Videos

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- 4. Do Video-Based Cold Calls.** I would be pro-active and brainstorm a list of Internet companies you might want to approach. Send an introductory email with a link to your website and YouTube Video. This approach beats mail-outs and template emails because you're sending a customized video that is quickly and easily viewable.
- 5. Simplify your video-sharing tasks using tools such as [TubeMogul](#) and [TrafficGeyser](#).** In our upcoming Internet Marketing VA Course, we go into more detail on video marketing as a powerful job search strategy. We'll give you some tangible examples on the "dos" and "don'ts" for your video presentations.

## STRATEGY #6: Create and Share Relevant Content

It is an undisputed fact among most Search Engine Marketers today that creating and sharing relevant, keyword-specific content is one of the most powerful strategies to ignite search engine listings and visitor traffic.

Google and the other major search engines love unique and relevant content. Many savvy marketers are seeing exponential increases in website traffic simply by producing and sharing relevant content through the right channels.

Web content takes on many different forms, including:

- Blog posts
- Ezines and Reports
- Ebooks
- Articles
- Videos and Podcasts

By consistently creating and distributing relevant content, you reap the following benefits:

- You experience increases in your search listings and web traffic based on the keywords you target in your content. As a Virtual Assistant, you want to be pumping out content on every topic related to VAs under the moon so that you are enhancing your listings for keywords related to the Virtual Assistant realm.
- You position yourself as an authority in your respective industry. More people will begin to follow your blog posts, read your articles, or buy your ebooks etc...This only further increases your business exposure.
- You create a nice new stream of traffic from the content-sharing sites you use for content distribution.


Now, you may not consider yourself a writer, but if you are an expert in your field on particular topics, then just start writing! Then, outsource the editing and proofreading tasks to an expert.

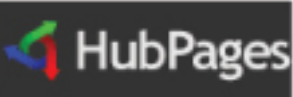
You can also outsource all your writing projects, but it may be harder to establish your own voice and credibility when someone else produces the work on your behalf. I know some people who are not grammar "gurus", but a great editor cleans up their work without taking away from the original content.

The important thing is that you produce and share a regular stream of content no matter how you choose to coordinate your writing efforts

## STRATEGY #6: Create and Share Relevant Content


There are a lot of excellent places and channels to share your content on the Internet. We cover them in our Internet Marketing VA course. Here are just a few of my personal favourites:


 **Digg** (and other social news sites) are high-volume channels for expanding exposure for your content and site. It is helpful to use tools such as [SocialMarker.com](http://SocialMarker.com) to syndicate your content to many social news sites. Digg and other popular Social News sites see a LOT of traffic. They rank high in the SEs, resulting in a quality one-way link back to your site.


 **HubPages** is an increasingly popular online publishing network. Everyday authors (such as yourself) produce "hubpages" on topics they are well versed in. Articles earn recognition through the community-wide hub-score ranking system. So, the more votes you receive, the better position you have in hubpages - and that results in more traffic.

Google and Yahoo love hubpages and may potentially list your hubpages high based on particular keywords you focus on in your content.

As an added bonus, Hubpages shares revenue with you through [Google AdSense](http://Google AdSense), Amazon and other popular monetizing programs. It is possible to make a few bucks using this channel.

 **Squidoo** is another content-sharing channel where you can become an authority on topics related to your industry. You can set up as many "lenses" in your Squidoo profile, which is essentially your view on a particular topic (such as the top 10 reasons businesses hire Virtual Assistants). As your lens grows in popularity, you will begin to see steady traffic from other Squidoo users as well as from the Search Engines. (Google and Yahoo quickly index Squidoo Lenses.)

 **EzineArticles** is one of the most popular article directories on the 'Net. This place lets you position yourself as an Expert Author in the Virtual Assistant category to achieve excellent targeted traffic to your articles and site. (All your articles should include a link to your site in the resource box.)

 **PRWeb** is the most widely used press release distribution channel on the 'Net today. It is ideal to submit Press Releases through PRWeb when you have new announcements for your business. I have always seen a nice, steady stream of targeted traffic back to my site after launching a PRWeb campaign.

For a fee of about \$200, PRWeb syndicates your Press Release through the Newswire (to thousands of publishers) as well as to major online news channels such as Google and Yahoo News. In addition, they provide premium exposure of your press release on the actual PRWeb homepage, which results in some additional traffic.

## STRATEGY #6: Create and Share Relevant Content

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PRWeb also provides press release writing and editing services as well as PR templates for you if you are not fully comfortable writing your own press releases.

There are a few good channels to start distributing your content today. While content creation can be a time-consuming process, I can't emphasize the powerful long-term benefits it has for driving quality visitor traffic to your site enough!

## STRATEGY #7: Create a "Winning" Profile in the Main Freelancer Sites

Recently, the popular freelance site Elance.com ran a "Win a Virtual Assistant for 2008" contest.

They asked businesses to give their best pitch on why they needed a Virtual Assistant for 2008 - and Elance received tons of entries.

The contest came on the heels of Timothy Ferriss' popular book, [The4HourWorkWeek](#), and the fast-growing interest in hiring Virtual Assistants to perform a whole variety of tasks.

It is definitely worthwhile to setup your Virtual Assistant profiles in popular marketplaces like [Elance](#) and [Guru](#). We'll be launching an exclusive VA marketplace, too, and it's geared for students that successfully complete all ten modules of our Internet Marketing VA Certification course - stay tuned!

As of March 2008, there were around 2500 Virtual Assistant profiles on Elance. With growing competition, this means you need to consider ways to separate your profile from the rest of the pack. Here are a few ideas:

1. Take advantage of Elance's new YouTube Video feature to upload a video that creatively communicates your business services through a quick tutorial like, "The 10 Best Productivity Tools for your Business" or, "The Top 10 Reasons to Hire a VA." Just make it concise and catchy for a competitive edge over other profiles.
2. When bidding on projects, be as specific as you possibly can be. We own an outsourcing marketplace, [ESalesGuru.com](#), and we often see members put some very general points in their bids that don't address the specific needs of the buyer - this is a serious turn-off.
3. Include relevant references or testimonials in your profile that convey the quality of your work and services.
4. Use Live Chat features in Elance to connect with prospective clients visiting your profile.
5. Include a compelling tagline and business logo.

## STRATEGY #8: Use Testimonials to Build Credibility and Attract New Clients

Once you establish a good working relationship with your clients, it is essential to get glowing testimonials to incorporate into your website content. Businesses always like to see what other businesses say about you. Testimonials add credibility and somewhat legitimize your skills and service offerings. It is good to list the clients that you have worked with, but it is ten times better to get some specific feedback from those clients to post on your site.

I think it is important to place at least one testimonial above the fold - the first visible screen of your homepage - as this may help visitors stick to your site longer. So, strategically place your testimonials on the home page for maximum visibility, as they're a crucial part of the marketing process!

Now, if you are a new VA or haven't had a client in some time, you may not have many (or any) testimonials to put on your site. Here is one idea to consider if you are in need:

You might offer a particular service (such as Directory/ Article Submission) to a prospective client at NO CHARGE so they can see the quality of the services you offer. You could ask to be compensated with a testimonial in return even if they don't hire you.

Naturally, you don't want to volunteer your services on a long-term basis, but when you are starting out, this is a good way of building rapport with prospective clients and potentially receiving some great testimonials you can use.

Testimonials are a vital element to your site. It might be necessary to consider an out-of-the-box strategy like this in order to get what you need especially if you are just starting out. Food for thought...

## STRATEGY #9: Attend Internet Business Conferences (when possible) and Be Memorable

Most networking opportunities for Virtual Assistants are online through business networks or social media groups. There are also certainly many offline Internet Business conferences throughout North America and the UK, where you can connect face-to-face with prospective clients.

Many have conference fees (some quite hefty), but some conferences such as [Ad-tech](#) (held yearly in SF, NY and Chicago) and [Search Engine Strategies](#) (held in San Jose, New York, and Toronto) allow you to register for a free "Exhibit Pass Only".

Typically, you can listen to keynote speakers and attend a couple of the non-member social functions. Some conferences, such as [Affiliate Summit](#) (held yearly in Las Vegas, Miami and London), have reasonable fees to access the exhibit hall and networking functions.

If you are going to invest time and money to attend one of these Internet Biz conferences, it is important to make the most of the opportunity and be as memorable as possible.

One creative idea is to wear a shirt that says "VA for Hire - helping you make more \$\$\$\$ for your biz!" Yes, wearing a shirt like that takes some guts (any maybe a few drinks before hand:), but it could be a fresh way of getting the word out to a captive audience.

Another idea might be to hand out some gift or useful gadget that catches people's attention and includes your business contact details. One business I worked at had us hand out bags of chocolate-covered coffee beans with our brand and logo on the package. The printed message on the package was the catchy phrase "A Fresh Blend of Web marketing Innovation". The gift was very well received and made us memorable to many people.

The bottom line is that you want to stand out from the pack. I have been to many of these conferences and if I were to see a VA networking and marketing a business in a creative way, I would definitely make note of the person for future reference.

Remember, many small and medium size Internet Companies are desperate to offload some of their work to a Virtual Assistant. They may not have gotten around to actually hiring someone, so the timing could be just right!

Another consideration is to contact some of the Internet companies from your prospect list prior to the conference to see if you can schedule a **brief** introductory meeting. This pro-active approach shows these companies you are serious. In the email, emphasize brief, as many of these companies are busy and have important business scheduled.

Now, this networking process is not necessarily easy, but it is vital for gaining exposure, business contacts and new clients for your VA business.

## STRATEGY #10: Build a List!

If you were to pick the brains of some top Internet Marketing minds such as Mike Filasaime, Frank Kern, Andy Jenkins and Russell Branson, they would first ask you what you are doing to build a list of email contacts.

If you were to respond by saying, "I am not building an email list at this point," they would immediately grow red in the face and proceed give you an earful!

It does not matter what type of Internet business you operate. One marketing constant remains the same through all businesses - You need to provide the avenue for your prospective clients to opt in to your list!

Most marketers are pained to see a user (aka prospective client) visit a site only to leave a few short seconds later - that hurts! The end goal for any marketer is, at the VERY least, to collect the user's name and email address. They want to build a rapport and create an opportunity to convert those visitors to customers in the future.

The human psyche is interesting. Many people require multiple follow-up communications before they buy a product or try out your services.

Here are some quick steps to establish an opt-in list of potential clients for your VA business:

### 1. Place an Opt in-Box Above the Fold on your Site.

It is important to have a very visible opt-in box on the first visible screen of your site so that website visitors easily see it. Typically, if you put the opt-in box near the top on the right or left side of the page, it will attract attention.

Take this Virtual Assistant's website as an example: [www.bsetc.ca](http://www.bsetc.ca). She includes a simple opt-in box on the right hand side of the page. She also provides an image within the opt-in box, which is a smart way to attract users.

### 2. Offer a clear and compelling incentive for users to opt in to your list.

In the example above, the virtual assistant provides a relevant e-course called "30 Ways to Lighten Your Work Load". She is offering a very applicable resource for prospective clients she seeks to reach.

In addition to free content, you might run a promotion or contest where you give away "8 Hour Work Day" absolutely FREE. This entices prospective clients with tight budgets to opt in to your list. Another idea is to ask a "burning" question like, "What do you have on your VA wish list right now?" The key is to be creative and look at offering directly relevant bonuses to the audience you are targeting.

## STRATEGY #10: Build a List!

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### 3. Create an email auto-responder series.

It is essential to set-up an auto responder system like [Aweber](#) or [Constant Contact](#) in order to automate your follow-up communications with people who opt into your list. Auto responders simplify your life! Provide some relevant communication every few days (don't bombard people with too many emails or they may quickly unsubscribe) that provides content and even special offers related to your VA business (such as a time-limited discount on your services).

The object is to build rapport and credibility with people on your email list so that when they require VA services, you are the first person they call!

Now, if you are not currently building an email list for your VA business, don't be left in the dust by your competitors! I promise that you build a business at a much faster rate by creatively drawing website visitors to opt in.

There you have it... 10 Sure-Fire Marketing Strategies that have had a huge impact on exposure and success for our Internet Businesses - and they'll hopefully do the same for yours!

We would love to hear your feedback and comments on this ebook! Visit our blog post pertaining to "10 SureFire Marketing Strategies" at the link below:

<http://blog.vaclassroom.com/ten-surefire-strategies-for-marketing-your-VA-Business>

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback on our blog!