

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Sharon received the designation of Master Virtual Assistant from vacertification.com.

Q. When and why did you start your business?

A. I started the business in November 1990, because I was laid off from local government employment. As a result of this layoff, I decided that I would never have anyone else determine if I was going to receive a paycheck. My financial destiny was going to be in my hands and I would determine my own future.

Q. What services do you offer?

A. The 24 Hour Secretary is open 24/7. We offer administrative, secretarial, and virtual assistant support ranging from: digital (telephone dictation), medical/legal/insurance/general topic transcription, conference recording, event planning, concierge services, travel coordination, desktop publishing, document processing, and a wide range of as-needed services that clients think of.

Q. What do you enjoy most about being a VA?

A. I love the flexibility of working with different clients and learning about their business. I feel it is very interesting to hear a business concept or new idea and then wonder "why didn't I think of that", as I often do. I also enjoy marketing the business over the internet, and hearing the surprise in many of our 1st time callers' voices when they realize that they are actually speaking with someone who is working in the office at 3 o'clock a.m.

Q. What advice do you have for other VA's just starting out?

A. I advise all new VA's to research the industry and understand that working from home is a "full-time" job. You must consciously make the decision to run it as a business and be dedicated to that effort. I also suggest that each new VA develop a business model and marketing strategy before they begin the business. By doing so, they can have a written document to refer to and compare their milestones in the business. Lastly, I strongly suggest that they have and maintain the support of all the members of their household -- be

sure that they understand that becoming a VA is not just a hobby, but your career, and it is just as important as any other life decision that you make.

Q. Is there a person or event in your life that inspired you to start your business?

A. Yes, as I mentioned previously, I was laid off from my "good government job". After serving with great loyalty and dedication for many years, my department head had no problem in telling me that although I was a "great employee" I had to go. Since I was a great employee for someone else, I determined that I could even be a greater employee for myself. I have never looked back!