



INTELLIGENT OFFICE

# Advantage: Virtual Office

YOUR GUIDE TO WORKING MORE INTELLIGENTLY



*Have you ever wondered why some small businesses are successful and others are not and what do these successful companies do to gain an edge over their competition? Through our years of experience we have seen thousands of companies thrive by taking advantage of the fundamental benefits provided by virtual offices and virtual assistants explained in this guide.*

*Virtual offices and virtual assistants offer small businesses a competitive advantage because they allow owners to delegate numerous time consuming administrative tasks, provide and maintain a professional image for their clients and customers and significantly reduce overhead*

*These fundamental advantages will help you to evaluate the benefits of working more intelligently with virtual offices, virtual assistants, and intelligent workspaces. Here's to your success!*

# Delegate Your Task-Oriented Office Work

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As a small business owner, your time is valuable. It needs to be spent on generating new customers, existing clients and focusing on your business strategy. That means delegating the day-to-day tasks and duties that take you away from spending time on your company vision, your prospects, your customers and your employees.

A virtual assistant is more than a telephone receptionist. A skilled virtual assistant staff can screen unwanted calls, answer very specific questions about your business and much more – truly a personal assistant. Here are a few of the common tasks a virtual office assistant should be able to handle with ease:

- » Schedule appointments and coordinate meeting details
- » Handle registrations for seminars and events
- » Capture new prospect information
- » Handle data entry
- » Route messages and voice mail to a cell phone or email inbox
- » Answer customer inquiries
- » Provide customer order processing
- » Disseminate lead information
- » Complete online order processing
- » Forward mail
- » Fulfillment of marketing materials
- » Offer notary services
- » Distribute company payroll
- » Complete customer intake forms
- » Assist with other custom fulfillments

Virtual assistants are particularly useful if you only need part-time administrative assistance, but you can also utilize multiple virtual assistants for full-time projects. For example, promoting an event might cause an increase in phone calls so a team of virtual assistants provided by a full-service virtual office company can handle the volume without the need to hire additional employees or find and train temporary help. Think of having access to a pool of highly flexible, qualified personnel that are ready for any demands that your business has – but unlike a traditional office, you only pay for them when you need them!



## Better Communications

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Virtual assistants should be able to answer phone calls in the name of your company with any greeting you'd like. You should also seek a company that provides a professional staff that has the ability to screen and route your business telephone calls according to the exact instructions you provide. A quality virtual assistant service should be able to provide the same connectivity and attentiveness you'd expect from hiring a traditional receptionist, without personal days, vacation days, sick days, or other lapses in coverage. In the case that calls need to be routed to a voice mailbox, make sure your virtual assistant service is able to provide individualized greetings and the ability to update contact instructions or call handling requirements as often as needed - even several times throughout the day.

All professional remote receptionists should be backed by leading-edge technology so they can route calls to any phone and offer many conveniences for retrieving messages and faxes including:

- » Sufficient voice mailbox capacity including longer messages.
- » Routing faxes to a virtual web-mail box or shared office space.
- » Re-directing faxes to another fax machine.
- » Converting your incoming faxes to a .pdf document.
- » E-mailing faxes and voicemails to you anywhere in the world.

Leading virtual office companies should provide multiple, highly trained virtual assistants who are all equally knowledgeable about your business to handle incoming calls. To make sure you never miss important calls, use a virtual office company with multiple trained assistants attending the phones simultaneously.

# Create and Maintain a Professional Image

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People are more likely to want to do business with you when your business looks successful, professional and well-established. When most people think of successful businesses, they think of physical offices, singular phone numbers and multiple employees. You can have all that and more with a virtual office for a fraction of the cost of renting office space and hiring a staff to handle customer inquiries.

**The first key** to a professional image is providing a single business phone number that people can call instead of asking people to track you down by promoting two or three different phone numbers. Using cell phones as your primary or only business number does not communicate professionalism. The use of a virtual office phone number also helps protect the privacy of your personal phone numbers and provides a single point of contact for your customers whether you're out of town, working from home, or simply out on an errand.

**The second key** to a professional image is promoting a physical location. You don't have to spend any time in your virtual office location, but it's important to advertise the fact that you have a physical office to make your business seem more established and reliable. Leading virtual office companies are located in Class "A" commercial office buildings with prestigious addresses. This address becomes your business address. As a virtual office client, your "office" is staffed and represented professionally during business hours. Your clients will always be greeted even when you are not there.

**The third key** to a professional image is the ability to send and receive mail and faxes without using a PO Box or a public fax machine. A full-service virtual office company helps you avoid unwanted trips to the office to pick up your mail or faxes, by forwarding mail and faxes to the address of your choice.

You should also choose a virtual office company that includes a locked, private mailbox that you can access 24/7. When you're traveling, make sure your virtual assistant is able to monitor and forward mail to you anywhere in the world.

Many virtual office companies provide postal services including mailboxes, package receiving, shipping, express delivery and other postal conveniences.

**The fourth key** to a professional image is meeting clients in a professional setting. Coffee shops and restaurants aren't professional places to conduct business and they are full of potential distractions. Choose a virtual office company with a prestigious business address in an established Class "A" commercial building. Make sure your virtual office company also provides professionally designed and furnished offices, conference rooms and reception areas staffed with knowledgeable, friendly people. Make certain your virtual office has an appropriate sized conference room, beautifully appointed and equipped to make you and your business shine. If you work from home, a virtual office is also great way to protect your privacy so you don't have to invite clients to your house or give away your home address. Make sure you find a shared office solution that is available a la carte, so you pay only for what office space and virtual office services you use.



## Minimize Your Office Overhead

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Minimizing overhead for a small business is critical to its viability and success. For most businesses the primary need for professional office space is for client meetings. Ask yourself how many hours a week do your clients come to your

office. A virtual office provides an affordable and professional alternative to renting traditional office space. Renting cheap office space doesn't give your business a professional image and renting traditional office space in a good location often costs more than it's worth. Here are a few of the cost-saving benefits of virtual offices compared to leasing traditional office space.

### Traditional Office Lease

- » Usually locked in to a long-term commitment.
- » You pay for all the space regardless of your use.
- » Requires your own technology such as phone systems and security.
- » Requires the expense to staff the office or lock when you're gone.
- » Requires the purchase of furniture such as desks, chairs and conference tables.
- » Requires insurance to cover your office furniture and technology.

### Virtual Office Lease

- » Office rentals available hourly, daily, or monthly.
- » Pay only for the space you need, when you need it.
- » Phone systems and other technology included.
- » A virtual office is staffed by a shared employee, even when your away from the office.
- » Furnished offices and conference rooms.
- » Office furniture in a shared office is covered by the company.
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Many of the best cost-savings in virtual office environments are tied to the office space itself, but there are other savings in the operational efficiency and productivity generated by shared office spaces. Some examples:

- » Virtual assistants allow you to avoid recruiting, hiring, training, and managing employees.
- » Virtual office clients generally do not need to deal with phone companies for land lines, fax lines or toll-free numbers.
- » Virtual office companies provide internet service so its clients don't have to contract independently.

A virtual office lease lets you rent office space in a variety of sizes to create a customized shared office to fit your business requirements. When you grow, you can increase the size of your space without shopping for another location.

Make sure your virtual office is tastefully decorated and free from noise, distractions and clutter. The best virtual office rentals should include the following amenities:

- » Class "A" commercial real estate building
- » 24/7 access to your shared office
- » Broadband Internet featuring both wired and Wi-Fi Internet access
- » Professional executive office furniture
- » A full-feature telephone handset with hands-free speaker
- » Side chairs for an executive suite
- » An executive style desk and file with attractive desk lamp

Another cost-saving factor to consider is the ability to office in multiple cities, or different areas of the same city. This is particularly beneficial to those who travel for business. Leasing traditional office space on the East coast and the West coast isn't as practical or affordable as securing virtual office space in multiple locations. If you have meetings in a variety of locations,

it's also nice to know that a virtual assistant can work locally to handle your meeting arrangements, provide catering from local sources, print materials, and professionally greet your clients.

Virtual offices and assistants also provide a significant opportunity for increasing revenue in addition to lowering costs. Smart business owners understand the value of each new customer and don't want to risk missing one through unanswered calls. Are all of your company's calls being professionally answered or are they going into voicemail? What's the value of a new client for your company and are you willing to risk asking that prospect to leave a voicemail and wait?

Lastly, leading virtual office companies provide networking and business development opportunities with other small businesses within their office and network of offices. If you're a business that serves other business, a virtual office community represents an opportunity to gain clients and referrals from other virtual office customers.

# Businesses That Use Virtual Offices

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## **Accountants, Auditors & Bookkeepers**

Having a professional, executive office space can help your accounting business grow. Making a great client impression is important, and a shared office space at a prestigious virtual business addresses can help keep your business overhead under control. Virtual offices provide a variety of solutions à la carte, so you can have access to a virtual receptionist, telephone answering service, administrative services and conference rooms on demand and pay for virtual office services only when you use them.

## **Business Consultants**

As a business consultant, you analyze and advise businesses on how to make the best possible choices to achieve their strategic goals. Virtual office executive office space is designed to help you do the same thing for your business consulting company. A virtual office can provide 24/7 access to your virtual office space and a capable virtual receptionist staff to make your firm more professional. A virtual office empowers you to leave clients with a great impression without jeopardizing your consulting business' financial position.

## **Legal Service Providers & Attorneys**

Appearance is important in the legal profession, and successful small law firms look and operate like large ones. Shared office space can help propel your law office to that next level. Virtual offices provided are guaranteed to be a fraction of the cost you would pay for a traditional office lease for a growing legal practice. As a result, you can leave clients with a great impression without putting your law firm in a financial bind.

## **Business Service Providers**

Business Service Providers handling software solutions and back-office tasks for small to medium-sized firms can benefit from a virtual office executive office suite. A virtual office can give you 24/7 access to a virtual office space and a capable virtual receptionist staff to make your firm appear more professional. Virtual offices can give Business Service Providers flexible shared office space to rapidly expand and contract your operation. Capable, remote receptionists make your firm appear more professional. Best of all, you pay for virtual office services only when you use them.

## **CIS Designers**

Virtual offices provide Computer Integrated Systems Designers 24/7 access to all of the à la carte virtual office and conference space they need to develop or modify computer software. From design to installation, you can focus on creating and marketing integrated systems instead of the hassles of managing overhead associated with a traditional commercial office lease. You can conduct business from a prestigious executive office suite on an as-needed basis at a fraction of the cost of traditional office rentals. And you can also rely on customized virtual receptionist services, shared administrative services and support staff.

### **Computer Programming Service Providers**

Let's face it, when you're in the business of writing, testing, troubleshooting and maintaining the source code of computer programs, where you choose to office can be almost as critical as the work itself. Virtual offices provide the à la carte shared office services and conference space you need – by the hour, by the day or by the week. All at a virtual office address that boosts your professional image. And while you're busy crafting new programs that will evolve into efficient software solutions, virtual assistants can lend support with virtual receptionist and telephone answering services.

### **Computer Service Providers**

In practically every community in the United States, individuals at small to medium-sized computer related services firms are thriving. Virtual offices are there to help these high-tech specialists, providing 24/7 access to executive office suites and virtual conference space. So, if you're a computer consultant operating on a contract or fee basis, you can afford your own shared office space to handle disk conversions, database developments, troubleshooting, whatever. And, virtual receptionist and phone answering services make it even easier to operate within a limited budget.

### **Contractors**

Most contractors spend the majority of their time working in the field on projects and find it difficult to answer their phones. By using a virtual office, they are able to offer their customers a live, courteous receptionist to answer their questions and even gather the information they will need in order to provide them a quote or an estimate. This dramatically increases the professionalism of their business by reaching a "live" person. It allows them to complete their projects in the field while maintaining a flow of new customers without the need to hire a full-time staff person to manage the phones.

### **Engineers & Engineering Service Providers**

If you're an engineering service provider, you're already focused on developing economical solutions to practical problems. Why should your commercial office overhead expenses be any different? With a virtual office, you can have 24/7 access to an executive office suite and shared conference rooms at a prestigious, virtual business address. You can also utilize virtual receptionist services and a full array of telephone answering services and administrative support staff. And, since virtual office solutions are available on an as-needed basis, it's a fraction of the cost of leasing a traditional commercial office.

### **Investment Advisors**

Investment advisors understand the need to lease upscale office space and meeting rooms that instill trust and confidence in clients. Any business that rents office space in a facility that looks like a fly-by-night operation usually is. Virtual offices provide upscale executive office suites and shared conference space at the most prestigious virtual business addresses in North America. Virtual receptionists are ready to provide telephone answering services so you can have an executive office space that portrays the utmost in professionalism and reliability. That's very comforting to those who trust you with their financial futures.

### **Health Care Professionals**

Whether you are a doctor, dentist, therapist, chiropractor, or massage therapist – your business requires a constant need to schedule appointments with your patients. Many health care professionals utilize a virtual office to manage those appointments in order to save a great deal of time and money. By ensuring all their clients are able to speak with a live person for any scheduling needs, they can avoid the typical frustration that is experienced when calling a medical professional's office. Hiring a virtual office instills confidence in your clients that their needs are your top priority.

### **Mortgage Bankers and Loan Correspondents**

For mortgage bankers and loan correspondents, collecting important information from clients is top priority. And often that's best handled in the privacy of a commercial office space or private conference room rather than a public setting. That's why more and more mortgage banking professionals rent shared office space from a virtual office company. Not only do you enjoy a prestigious virtual business address to impress current and prospective clients, but you also have access to all of the virtual receptionist services and administrative support staff you may need.

### **Management Consultants**

As a management consultant, you help organizations improve performance through analysis and planning. Often your assignments may require temporary office space across the US and Canada for one-time projects or short-term assignments. A virtual office executive office suite makes sense for consultants. You can have 24/7 access to shared office space and conference rooms at a prestigious virtual business address and all of the administrative and support staff you need.

### **Real Estate Agents & Managers**

Property showings are just one part of a real estate agent's life. It also involves meeting with clients to discuss location, amenities, listings and more. To help virtual offices provide shared executive office suites and private conference rooms on an as-needed basis. This allows busy real estate executives to manage all parts of a business process – from searching for residential or commercial properties to writing up offers to closing – from the comfort of a prestigious virtual office location. Plus, virtual receptionists are always ready to provide professional telephone answering services for your clients. Another valuable feature many real estate professionals enjoy is being able to have a pre-recorded message with detailed information about individual listings – a significant time saver.



## What Can a Virtual Office Do For You?

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We hope this guide to working more intelligently through the use of a virtual office has been beneficial to you. If you are wondering how your business might directly take advantage of these services and what savings you could enjoy as a result, we would like to help by introducing North America's premier virtual office company - The Intelligent Office.

## An Intelligent Solution

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Intelligent Office opened its doors in 1995, in Boulder, Colorado. The idea was simple. Clients could work from home or anywhere their laptops and cell phones took them while Intelligent Office would serve as their professional office base. Intelligent Office would field all business phone calls, faxes and mail, and provide a first-class corporate facility with offices and conference rooms available when needed on an as-needed basis.



INTELLIGENT OFFICE

**Learn how easy it can be to take advantage  
of Intelligent Office's many services.**

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