

talkingbusiness...

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Hear from the local voice of the business community

Valuing life and its virtual benefits

Jackie Baily of Virtuosity Executive Support talks about achieving a great work life balance and how her success is now helping many others.

It's 1996 and, as Finance Administrator for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, I was commuting to work in the heat of high summer. Heavily pregnant and swinging precariously from a tube strap, I was looking forward to some much needed maternity leave before my second child was due. Focusing, as I was, on remaining upright at that precise moment, it was evident that combining a family and busy career was a real juggling act. The rigorous demands of balancing a fulfilling home life with business needs are universal and with no one-size-fits-all solution, for me something had to give – either my sanity or possibly the strap to which I was clinging...



A qualified, bi-lingual PA with roots in classical music, my career had taken me to some amazing

places and fascinating jobs, from Stoll Moss Theatres to Tottenham Hotspur plc, Express Newspapers, the Chemical Bank and asset management companies; a wealth of experience that I wanted to put to effective use but within my own control as my family grew and our needs changed.

Much as I had enjoyed my work at the Opera House, I didn't return after the birth of my son, I needed to work but I also needed to be more independent and decided to advertise locally as a freelance PA. Within three months I had five clients and was enjoying the benefits of working from home but also helping businesses improve their efficiency with a flexible approach that fitted in with a varied work load.

May 2000 and expecting my third child, (I wonder if there is a pattern emerging here?) my family and I visit relatives in Yorkshire. It's not hard to imagine, knowing this beautiful county as we all do, how we instantly fell in love with a large town house skirting Thirsk's charming market place. We bought it and moved in, in October along with 19 builders, as there was plenty to do. My husband Paul, then Head of Remastering and Editing at Abbey Road Studios in London, also chose this move to take the freelance route and set up his own studio within the house, which had to be the first job - so no kitchen 'til April... But, with my computer online I hadn't left my London clients behind, I simply took them with me. It was then that I began to realise the truly flexible and effective nature of a virtual PA; when my clients needed me I was there to support them, sometimes at hours of the day when an office based PA's computer would be switched off.

With Paul's business, Re:Sound (UK) Ltd, launched and the children settled in school, I began to seriously look at growing my business, offering my experience to a wider range of clients, flexibly, affordably and with great virtual values! The light bulb really started to glow when I was asked to assist the former Chairman and CEO of the international corporation Texon. He needed PA assistance desperately as he was travelling across many time zones three weeks out of every four and site based staff just couldn't offer him the flexibility and support he needed. After two days it was clear that my 24/7 approach was hugely



Jackie Baily

Virtuosity Executive Support

beneficial to his life and business - Virtuosity Executive Support had arrived.

Today, I, and two hand-picked experienced virtual assistants (VAs), support over 18 clients that range from sole traders to SMEs and multinational corporate executives. With dedication, attention to detail, an experienced eye and 24 hour support, we offer busy people a powerful resource that enables them to spend more time on their business without the issues of staff retention or recruitment. From one hour to one day a week or retained services over a year, Virtuosity Executive Support offers businesses an ability to seamlessly bolt on an experienced team member as and when needed, translating into greater office efficiency and real cost savings within hard pressed budgets.

For our businesses to flourish, so must we. If we are overworked, overly stressed and feeling like we are always running to catch up, it will ultimately impact on our work and often our home lives too. When I speak to groups of business people it is sometimes hard for them to grasp the concept of just how much a VA can do, I often say, "I can sit in your pocket or on your desk; I can follow you wherever you go and be there when you arrive; I can save you money, help you sleep at night and crucially, I can give you back the time you need to get on with enjoying your life AND growing your business." That's really what my business is all about. Born out of a need to find a balance within my own life it's great to bring that relief to others too!

For further information about Jackie Baily and Virtuosity Executive Support call

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