



**You Don't Have to Do it on Your Own! How
a Virtual Assistant Can Save You Time,
Money and Frustration--AND Allow You to
Take Your Biz to the Next Level!**

June Training Call Notes

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Interview with Karen Brockman, Virtual Assistant of SoundSupportVA.com

What is a Virtual Assistant?

A virtual assistant, commonly called a VA, is a small business owner who provides administrative (and possibly personal) support by working with clients in long-term, collaborative relationships.

A VA works from her own office and has the ability to support another business without ever actually meeting face to face or visiting their office.

The support a VA provides is usually administrative in nature. There are VAs who offer additional specialties that are creative or technical or have additional specialized training to support their clients.

A VA works from her own office, owns her own business, pays her own taxes and insurance, maintains her own equipment using the latest technology and can support anyone, anywhere.

A VA is a professional business owner building a successful business.

I think it's important here to distinguish what a VA isn't, also. Don't you agree?

Absolutely. It's important to know that a VA is **not** someone who provides consulting services. That person is a consultant. A VA isn't someone who only provides bookkeeping services. That person is a bookkeeper. A VA isn't someone who only provides marketing support. That person is a marketing consultant or a marketing assistant. A VA isn't someone who books speaking engagements. That person is an agent. Nor are VAs Tax Advisors, Accountants, Medical Transcriptionists, Web Designers, or professional business and personal coaches.

What makes a person a VA is that the services that are being performed are administrative in scale and scope and are provided with the desire to support the client across the board, not with just one specific function or task.

What are the benefits of working with a VA?

Just imagine for a moment what it would be like, as a business owner, if you only had to deal with the things which truly needed your attention? How would this free up your time? Now, picture what your life would be like if you gave away a third or more of the work you now do. You'd have time for your family and friends! You'd have time to strategize and plan for the future growth of your business! You would become more balanced! In other words, you'd have a life!

A VA backs you up and makes it possible for you to free up your time to earn more money.

A VA offers support that lightens your load, ***gives you the ability to leverage your time*** and helps you shine with your clients and customers.

What if your VA doesn't know how to do something you need done?

A good and properly trained VA, as the administrative professional she is, (and I use she as my pronoun of choice because the majority of virtual assistants are women) will go out and find the expert who can do the job. VAs don't know how to do everything, of course, but they can connect you with the person who knows how to do that particular task and they can also manage the process, if that's what you need her to do.

Why wouldn't I want to work with one of the secretarial services I've seen around my area?

If what you want and need is the most basic secretarial support, then you might just want to work with a local secretarial service. But if you want the benefit of working with someone who really wants to know you, your business, your customers, and who wants to be deeply involved in your success, you'll want to work with a VA.

Isn't working with a VA more expensive than hiring an employee?

Virtual assistance was never intended to be the low-cost alternative to getting administrative support. It was intended to be, and actually IS the most convenient alternative to having on-site employees provide that support. Depending on the VA, you might pay as you go, giving her only the amount of work you actually have during any week or month, or you might have her on retainer – buying a certain amount of the VA's time each month for a pre-set hourly rate. One payment, once each month. Just great support from someone dedicated to your success.

How do you know if you need a VA?

As you know, there's a lot to be done to keep things moving smoothly. Sooner or later, it's going to occur to you that you're spending too much time running the business, to run the business. In other words, you will find you are so caught up in the day to day stuff, that you can't find the time or energy to focus on the things that really need your attention. That's when you know you need a VA.

Having a VA means that I will have to give my VA some of the work I used to do myself. Many people find delegating work difficult. What work should I delegate to my VA and how do I decide? Do you have any tips for what and how to delegate tasks and projects?

Yes, I sure do. One of the activities I suggest is to create a "Stop Doing List". When I suggest to my clients to make a Stop Doing list, I think of the analogy it compares to in the Weight Watchers industry. Have you ever heard that when you want to lose weight the Weight

Watcher counselor will have you write down everything, and when they say everything, they are serious, they mean for you to track everything, because many people eat beyond their 3 daily meals with snacks and sodas and you name it, all those calories add up. And many people who struggle with their weight eat out of habit and don't even think about it.

Well, a Stop Doing List works in a similar way. It's an activity that helps you to do a sort of *brain dump*, getting those tasks out of your head and onto paper. It works like this: Spend a week or so writing down each thing you do in your business, from phone calls to checking emails to the details involved in sending your newsletter, compiling mailing lists, updating your website, doing follow-ups, customer support and etc. I am sure you get the idea. Diligently make as thorough a list as possible. This list will help you to see what you are doing that is not directly revenue producing and will help you to evaluate the tasks that you do on a daily basis. Now you have a list that can help you figure out what you'd like to hand over to an assistant. Making this list will give you ideas and can bring more discipline and focus to your thoughts as you think about what you want to delegate.

How can I possibly afford a VA?

You'll need to consider where you are with your budget and what you can afford to pay. Most VAs work in 2 basic ways – Pay as you go and retainer.

If you have come to the conclusion that you really need this kind of support and your budget is tight, look for a VA who will work on a pay as you go basis. As your VA begins to take things that are bogging you down off your plate, this frees you to do more and more direct revenue producing activities and as you create more revenue for yourself this allows you to more easily afford your VA. You see it's kind of a snowball effect ?– going in a positive direction.

How do I choose a VA?

Give yourself plenty of time and space to talk to at least a couple of VAs. Not all VAs work the same way or do the same things. Remember VAs are all business owners and all work differently. There are plenty of VAs out there – take the time to find one that works best for you.

There are also VAs that structure their business as a team. That is, there is a main VA, usually the owner or manager of the VA business, and she has several VAs that she contracts with to do the work for her clients. When working with a VA who passes your work on to a team member, there is a disadvantage in that you will not get to develop a relationship with that VA. She will not have the ability to climb into your business and learn what you do so she can better support you. And you may have different VAs doing different tasks for your business. This could affect the continuity of what you are attempting to achieve in your business. This is something to keep in mind as you talk to potential VAs that you'd like to work with.

Remember that a VA is a business owner. A VA is not an employee or just an administrative assistant or secretary. Be mindful that you should approach a virtual assistant as one business owner to another.

Choose a person who clicks with you. If you feel a connection and find you share similar work styles, and the VA feels the same way, that could be a very good fit. A VA/client relationship is just that – a relationship. You want to work with someone who has a few things in common with you and you feel a connection. You'll want someone who gets what you do and has the skills to follow through.

The way I work or the way your friend or colleague works with her VA may not necessarily be a good fit for you and how you do things.

Are you a planner or do you tend to get things done at the last minute? Do you tend to be organized or dis-organized? Do you generally see the glass as half full or half empty? You get the idea. Get the right fit for you. Personality and work styles do matter. Choose the right person that you can work well with. Working with a VA should be fun for you and for your VA. You should feel somewhat of a connection with that person. It does not have to be a long, drawn out process to find the right VA.

You might want to create *your ideal VA list*. List all the qualities you would like your VA to have – as an example - do you prefer someone who is upbeat and cheery or someone who is straightforward and direct? Also add things you're looking for in the relationship overall, as well as what your expectations are for the short and long term.

In my opinion, the relationship is the most important thing, as long as the VA has the skills and professionalism that you are looking for. Virtual assistants can always learn new things if they need to, to help support you and your business. What you share in common will help to further the relationship and as the relationship progresses, trust is built and your VA will become your chief cheerleader and supporter to help you further your business goals.

What should I ask a potential VA?

You might want to know how long they have been in business and they will probably want to know the same about you.

You may want to know how many clients they have and to be reassured that they have the time to support you and your business each month.

You may want to know what kind of training the VA has, if any.

Does she know WordPress (if your website is done in WordPress and you expect her to be able to edit your website), Dreamweaver, if your site has been created using advanced HTML and Dreamweaver, does she know how to manage auto responders, create sales pages, do ezines and newsletters, accounting, know how to manage a virtual shopping cart,

create websites, or have specialties? Knowing what you plan to delegate before talking to VA will help you formulate the questions so you get the information on what the VA really will be able to handle for you.

You might also want to know how much lead time she may need to complete a project. This will help you to know how far ahead you may need to plan to delegate any certain tasks.

Ask for testimonials or for clients that you can contact. Talk to those clients if you can. Having conversations, either by phone or email, with current or former clients may give you a feel for the VA, her work style and relationship skills. Many VAs have a page on their website with testimonials and links to the websites of those clients who provided testimonials, which makes it easy for you to contact them. Give yourself plenty of time to do some online research and carry out a couple of phone or Skype interviews.

You'll probably want to know how the VA gets paid.

Does she work on retainer? Does she offer pay as you go? Does she roll over unused retainer hours to the next month? Does she charge at the beginning or the end of the month? How does she take payments? PayPal, Intuit, checks? Does she take credit cards?

What is the usual fee for a VA?

Most VAs bring between 10 to 20 years of corporate business experience to their VA business. And then they have learned new skills beyond that, that they need to operate in a virtual world. VAs can charge from \$30/hour (usually a VA beginning her business) all the way up to over \$100 an hour. If they have a particular skill set that is much more techie than the average VA, like managing InfusionSoft accounts for clients, then the fees may be on the higher end.

You'll want to know and ask about the skill set behind their rate.

What if you live in a different time zone than your VA? Isn't that an important consideration?

A VA in a different time zone can extend your work day, actually. Consider this - If you live in the United States on the West Coast and your VA is on the East Coast, imagine how much work will be done in the morning before you ever get to the office! If you live on the East Coast and your VA is on the West Coast, think of how much more she can get done after you leave for the day!

Whether your business is national or international, you can extend your business hours with the support of a VA who is in her office before or after you are in yours.

Where do you find VAs?

You might start by asking your colleagues for some good referrals and I also can give you some websites you might want to check out.

AssistU.com – Assist University is where I received my VA training, and they have a registry of VAs who graduated from their program. Interested VAs will respond to you through the registry. This is a free service to you.

IVAA.org - International Virtual Assistant Association – Has a system for entering RFPs – a Request for Proposal – This is also a no- charge service.

VAClassroom.com – a training organization that trains VAs in specialized skills. They have a list of qualified VAs who have completed VA Classroom certification programs. At the top of their web page you'll want to click on the tab called Find A VA.

How long would you expect to work with a VA?

Let's say you have found a VA and you are working together successfully in a collaborative partnership, where she is assisting you and has climbed into your business to learn about you, your customers, and your life and is learning as much about your business as you are willing to share with her. You are working to build a relationship with trust and respect and along with her growing knowledge of your business, she has begun to assist you in ways that you can see will propel your business forward and get you into a position to meet your goals. So in building a valuable partnership like that, how long would you want to work together? As long as you and your VA are enjoying the work and having fun, it's a win-win situation. I know VAs that are still working with clients they met over 8 years ago, when virtual assistance, as a profession, was not as well known.

JOIN US!



This membership site is a fantastic complement to the 6 Steps System!

A Letter From Christine:

Dear Prospective Club Member:

Would you like to work less, play more, make more money, meet amazing colleagues and just have lots more fun?

As an owner of the 6 Steps System, I'd like to make you an Exclusive Member of my **Social Media Mastery Club**.

If you accept my offer, you'll get immediate access to all the benefits of being an Exclusive Club Member. And I'll even give you your first month for just ONE DOLLAR.

But you'll want to act NOW because membership is limited. Keep reading for full details and to find out more about all the benefits that I'm giving you!

In a moment I'll tell you how you can get instant access to all 20+ member benefits in the Social Media Mastery Club, but first I want to give you 2 reasons to read this whole letter:

1. If you want to create a successful and sustainable business using online marketing techniques, then the new Social Media Mastery Club Membership can show you exactly how to do that.
2. If you need cash fast, then you need to join RIGHT NOW because the Social Media Mastery Club Membership has LOTS of stuff for you to start using TODAY.

I'm giving you tons of Strategies, Tactics, Tools and Resources to help you start or grow your product, info-product or service business, and they're waiting for you in the Social Media Mastery Club right now!

You see, over the past several months, I've been getting email after email that pretty much say the same thing: "Christine, your teleseminars are great, and I've already devoured my copy of The 6 Simple Steps to Kick Start Your Social Media Success System™ but I want MORE. What else have you got?"

Many of you have told me that you'd like to become a VIP or Mastery client of mine, but you either can't afford (yet!) my fees or you don't qualify (again, yet!). This got me thinking...how might I be able to offer a solution?

So, it's been a top priority these past few months to develop an alternative to my VIP and Mastery programs, that gives you access to me, but that's still affordable to you. I realized that I could offer you more "shelf-help"—you know, the kind that you buy and then plop on your shelf, never to be looked at...no matter how great the material is. But no, I didn't want to do that. I wanted to create a place for you that would provide inspiration and motivation and help spur you into ACTION consistently.

For myself in my business, I do this in two ways: one through a membership site that I personally belong to, and the other through my own private coach, both of which have helped grow my own business beyond my wildest dreams.

And while I do have plans to offer a private mastermind group in the coming months, it will still be an exclusive group which will require serious investment and commitment. But I knew I could offer a really amazing membership for a very affordable price, particularly for those who are just starting out in business and who might have a smaller budget available for educational needs.

As I've been creating and designing the site and the program, I've come up with a long list of benefits for you, including these two big ones:

- the exact same strategies and systems I myself use to generate consistent cash flow each and every month using information products and the Internet
- the community experience, so that you, my Ideal Client, and I can brainstorm, network and connect with each other.

So I'm thrilled to invite you to join my exclusive "Social Media Mastery Club!"

Here's what just some of my current and previous clients and students have to say about learning from me:

"Before taking Christine's 6 Steps TAG program, I was brand new to Twitter and had only used Facebook for purely personal purposes. I was just starting my own business and had no website or Facebook Fan Page. I am techno-challenged so all of this was very intimidating to me, but I did not have the funds to hire a professional to set it all up for me.

However, since completing the 6 Steps TAG program, my website is complete and my Facebook Fan page is ready to go. Christine helped me accomplish the two biggest goals I had when I registered for her course.

I realize that there is a lot more I can learn and do with both my website and Fan Page, and I feel confident that I can explore other options for successfully using both of them with what I learned from Christine. Her 6 Steps course manual is so comprehensive that I know I will return to it time and time again in the future.

I would not hesitate to recommend Christine and her programs. She has a wonderful teaching style, and she has a wealth of knowledge that she shares with her students. She answered every question very clearly, and she was always quick to respond to questions in between classes. She uses a variety of formats to teach (webinars, teleclasses, and the written manual) so there is a style that everyone can learn from.

I look forward to taking more classes from Christine in the future. There are a ton of courses out there that are offered, and some of them are nothing but scams. Christine is the real deal, and her programs are affordable for anyone at any level."

*Lori Latimer
www.lorilatimer.com*

"I kept hearing that my small business should have a blog, but I was paralyzed by the whole concept. What technology should I use? What would I write? Why would anyone care? How can I find the time to research, create, and post my content AND run my business? How do I even get started?

That's when the 6 Steps TAG course came to my rescue. Christine's course took me step by step from "soup to nuts." Let me share with you what I've learned. You may not know these terms now, but that's the whole point. I didn't know them either. But, I do now!

I learned: why blogs are important to small business owners, typical reasons we resist them, which blogging platform to use and why, how to use the blogging platform including download, installation, themes, RSS feeds, measurements, plugins, how often to post, creating posts, generating content, and how to make my blog social media friendly which drives traffic between my blog and Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and more.

Why is any of this important to me as a small business owner? It helps me build relationships with past/present/future customers, so that when they are ready to purchase my

product/service, they know/like/trust me, and they contact me. Because of blogging and social media, I am given the opportunity to win their business.

What small business owner can afford not to learn these tools? What small business owner can afford to learn these tools using trial and error? And, with Christine and the 6 Steps TAG course, I got the heart of a teacher and the head of a social media professional to walk me through it all, step by step. As a result, I could not be more pleased with my return on investment. Thanks, Christine!"

*Tina Bonifacio
Organized By Tina
www.organizedbytina.com*

"Before hiring Christine as my Social Media coach, I dabbled in Facebook just on a personal level. I knew I needed help to get to the next level, and I knew Christine was the one to get me there.

Christine helped me set up my Facebook Fan/Like Page, she helped me set up my Blog, and she attached my Blog to my Facebook Fan/Like Page. Without Christine, I would never have gotten as far as I did. Many of my clients have told me that they really like reading my tips, I've gotten more fans and a client, and I've already gotten comments on my Blog. Christine has always been supportive, has taken the time to help me even when we weren't meeting, and responds to me in a timely manner.

I would HIGHLY recommend using Christine as a Social Media Coach. When I am ready to do more with Social Media (Twitter, etc), I will, without a doubt, be hiring Christine again."

*Barbara Berman
BB's Clutter Solutions
www.bb-clutter-solutions.com*

"I confess. I was an avowed skeptic of "social media" who found the geek-speak of many of its' bloggers and other advocates challenging, at best. Coaching with Christine exceeded my wildest expectations.

She thoroughly and promptly responded to all my rambling questions, concerns and confusions about which social media venues would work best for me, and in crystal clear language, walked me through precisely what I needed to do to explore this brave new world. She knows her stuff, and she's able to communicate that knowledge for the benefit of her clients better than anyone I've seen. Coaching with Christine was the best investment I've made in my business and in my own growth and development in a very, very long time."

*Jackie Jordan-Davis
Workplace Coaches, LLC*

"Before the 6 Steps TAG course, Tom (my husband/business partner) and I were struggling to find a way to market Tom's newly released book, Paris Insights – An Anthology. Though we looked at social media as a free source of publicity, we were not convinced of its usefulness as a business tool and were leery of its reputation as a time sink.

However, because of the 6 Steps TAG course, we launched a new blog in record time and got started on Twitter. We also manage our time better on Facebook. Now, we are ready to link all of our social media platforms and implement those links as soon as possible. We are going to use Christine's advice to create a launch strategy for the Kindle version of Paris Insights – An Anthology. We are also going to explore the possibility of forming strategic partnerships with complementary businesses.

And YES—I would you highly recommend Christine and the 6 Steps TAG group—without hesitation!"

*Monique Wells
Paris Insights
www.parisinsights.com*

"Social media was such a huge unknown for me. Not only the technical parts but the 'what do I do now' when I get it all in place! I also had several video clips from news segments and I did not know how to use them for marketing. I now have them on my own YouTube channel and can post them everywhere easily!

Additionally, I now have a Facebook Fan page with 60 fans. (Plus, as soon as I got my 25th fan, I knew to create a custom vanity URL for my Page thanks to Christine!) I even have a Hootsuite account that will post to all of my social media sites at once. Now I am able to put a plan together to schedule my posts. I have done several posts throughout the course, and I am now ready to get a system in place for which types of entries I will post and how often.

And YES! I would highly recommend Christine and the 6 Steps TAG group! Christine really taught me the new language of Social Media! She is also very good about answering questions between sessions. I think everyone in the class got more than their money's worth."

*Birdie Brennan
Brennan Professional Organizers
www.getorganizedcolumbus.com*

"Having recently started a new business, I thought there must be marketing potential in social media, but I had no idea where to start, which tools to use, or why I ought to use them. I had a 'corporate' style profile on LinkedIn, but no presence in any other outlet. Basically, I was skeptical and felt that I couldn't possibly find time to both learn and use the tools.

However, as a result of completing The 6 Steps Take Action Group program, I now have a complete social media presence, integrated through my new blog, and the foundations of a real strategy for my business. I have 40% more Facebook Fans and brand-new blog subscribers. Most importantly, I saved time avoiding mistakes and trying to 'figure it out myself,' and now have the confidence to engage in social media to build my business.

Going forward, I plan to continue to implement a strategy to build relationships with my target market through social media. I would highly recommend Christine and the 6 Steps TAG program for anyone who needs easy-to-follow, practical guidance on engaging social media to grow their business."

*Patti Whitehouse
The Original Basket Boutique
www.obbhouston.com*

"I signed up for Christine's in-depth 6 Steps TAG course because I was becoming more and more confused by the local, hour-long seminars I was attending that only seemed to touch on social media topics.

Throughout the course, Christine answered all my questions and has provided an invaluable course manual for her participants to keep and refer to when they are ready to tackle another marketing tool. Because of her course, my Facebook personal and Fan Page account connections have risen by 50%.

I would highly recommend her 6 Steps TAG group to anyone! Thank you Christine for your skills and personality!"

*Sue Engler
Englers Designer Images
www.englers.com*

There's lots more detail about the membership here: <http://bit.ly/masteryclubdollaraccess>

I really hope you'll join me and the others who are already enjoying all the benefits of being a Member in the Social Media Mastery Club!

With Success and Love,
Christine

Christine Gallagher
Your Relationship Marketing Mentor