



AMF Typing Services
Articles: A to Z



Articles - VA Tips and Tricks Blogging Challenge 2014

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Reference:

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Alison Fourie • Virtual Assistant • VAcertified • AMF Typing sServices



Owner of AMF Typing Services est. 2001 and Co-Founder of Tavasa est. 2008. With over 25 years of secretarial/office administration experience and an old school typist.

My dream was to have my own typing business, working from home and I am working and living that dream.

It has always been my goal to be able to help, assist, and share my knowledge and experience with Virtual Assistants within South Africa and Africa and to educate businesses, corporate's and entrepreneurs on the benefits of using Virtual Assistants.



AMF Typing Services® • South Africa • Est 2001 (15 Years 1/4/2016)

Tavasa • South Africa • Est 2008 (8 Years 8/8/2016)

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A is for Absentminded

What is Absentmindedness? It is not easy to explain and not too difficult I hope.

Absentmindedness is the ability to forget something simple that you should know or remember to do, work or other related things. As work is what I do mostly as a VA it is where I forget simple things to do.

Ah! Another day starts, what am I going to forget today, with absentmindedness always around you never know what is next. Will I forget my favourite hard space or is it something new, never a dull moment. This phenomenon (Absentmindedness) can strike at any time morning, afternoon or night, it is not picky. Just when you think you have everything under control, it strikes. How to spell this word, do this graph, I just did this type of graph last week. It just doesn't want to print today; I forgot to put the printer on. I need to fax this page but forgot to plug the fax line in. Simple but absentmindedness creates chaos.

An example for a specific client I need to use a hard space and keep on forgetting how to do it. Easy it is, easy to forget, especially when you are busy and under pressure. I know it is **control shift spacebar**, but not at the time.

That small thing called absentmindedness creates this panic to get onto the Internet and ask a VA friend to assist, make me look silly at times, but part of work, maybe it is part of Alzheimer's or not, who knows.

Solution, make notes on a continuous basis, use a notebook and keep them by you for your absentminded moments.



A is for Advice

My email is busy nonstop, mostly with prospective VAs asking for advice. I can only offer advice using my own experiences as a Virtual Assistant. I started out knowing nothing about this business and I learnt the hard way by just jumping in and doing the work. Today I have learnt many things along the way and feel that I am now capable of passing on my knowledge and sharing what I know with other new VAs starting out.

Most VAs today need advice on how to prepare their business plans, how do they invoice, how do they work out the rates, how to deal with clients and the work etc. I have worked with clients all over the world, so feel I have a fair bit of knowledge to assist others with. If a VA is able to apply the advice that I give and get something from it then the advice that I gave was worth it to me. I love to be able to help and advice others, I find it very rewarding.

It is easy giving advice using my own experiences as this makes the problems more realistic to the other VA.

The one bit of advice I like to give is to be organised, be in control of your business, show you know what you are doing, what you are talking about. Know your business inside and out, clients will quickly pick up on it if you don't know what you are talking about.

The best people to go to for advice are the people who have been in the industry a long time, the seasoned VAs, the experts in the industry.

The VA industry has to be the friendliest industry out there, VAs are always helping each other and sharing their knowledge.

Apply the advice that you are given, don't just sit on it and do nothing as that is a waste, apply the advice and go back for more advice as you need it. Never be afraid to ask for advice, a little bit of help can take you a long way.



B is for Business Plan

If you want to run/own your own Business, the best way to start, is to create your Business Plan. Sit and write/type down your idea. Write down all the steps it will take to make your idea work, put them into order, and start to organise your Business Plan. Writing down a plan/idea is being constructive and putting your idea into writing, is a positive step to making your business real. You need to list all the steps it takes to start your business, then



write down the way you are going to run your business (your procedures), your networking/marketing plans/strategy, your bookkeeping, your goals and values, a mission statement, etc put it all down in writing. This is your working Business Plan. You will look at this document often, updating it as your plans change and they will, as you learn more and more about running your business. Your Business Plan should be one of your first tools you create, to run your business.

Searching the Internet you will find lots of templates and details available about Business Plans, lots of people have written steps that you need/can follow to write up your plan, details that you need to include. Do Internet research about Business Plans and you will find it is not a difficult task but rather an easy task to complete and it is one step closer to running your own Business. I think this is a task that puts people off starting their own businesses, they think it is difficult but once started, it soon becomes easy.

You can find templates for Business Plans on the Internet. You need the following within your plan:

- Goals, Values and Objectives
- Mission statement, logo, company bi-line
- Procedures/structures on **how** you are going to run your business, how you will do your pricing, how you will invoice your clients, how will you collect overdue payments, how will you do your marketing, networking plans, what you will do when a potential clients contacts you, , how will you approach transcription work, typing, data entry etc. Copies of your company documentation (invoices, statements, forms etc). How will you work with a subcontractor etc
- Marketing strategy

- Networking strategy
- Advertising strategy
- Products and Services, what services will you offer clients, will you offer products like EBooks for sale on your website!
- Pricing Structure/Budget
- Skills, Training, Education, Resources
- Target/Niche Marketing - which type of clients are you going to market your services to? How are you going to approach clients?
- Company structure, how you are going to run your company. How will you do your invoicing, banking, statements, how will you do your books, approach clients, actually run your business
- Contacts, keep database of all your contacts and clients. Build this up over time
- Company Debt Collecting, procedure. You will come across clients who do not pay on time or simply don't want to pay and you will need a procedure in place of what you are going to do to recover payments for work you have done.
- Executive Summary, this sums up your business plan and is the most important piece of information within your plan, this is what you want the Bank Manager to read, is it sums up your whole idea of running your business. Make it interesting, highlight the major structures of your business, stress important points, this part must grab attention and basically sum up your whole business.



Determine your budget, you will need to advertise your company, you will need to do networking and marketing. Know how much money you have available to do this. Starting up a secretarial business does not cost too much if you already have the computer/office equipment you need. But you will need to advertise and market your company and attend networking events and joining business groups can cost you but it is part of owning your own business. You need to take these steps to grow your client database and get your company known in the corporate world.

B is for Barbara Blackburn

Barbara Blackburn, the World's Fastest Typist

<http://rcranger.mysite.syr.edu/famhist/blackburn.htm>

What is the secret as to how Barbara Blackburn could type so fast? The key, so to speak, is in the keyboard design. Blackburn would type on nothing but the Dvorak keyboard, which has vowels on one side and consonants on the other, with the most frequently used letters on the centre row. "It makes much more sense than the standard, so-called QWERTY keyboard (named after the first five letters on the top row)," Blackburn said. In fact, it was the QWERTY keyboard that was her undoing in high school typing class back in Pleasant Hill, Missouri.



"Typing was the bane of my existence." She remembered how her I-minus (I for Inferior) typing grade kept her from graduating at the top of her class. As it was, she graduated third in a class of 46 students. In 1938, as a freshman in Business College, Blackburn first laid hands on a Dvorak keyboard. She took to it like a fish to water. In only a few years her speed was up to 138 words per minute.

Blackburn had been such a whiz in her other high school classes, it was no surprise that she would attempt to better her record as a typist, given a chance. The Dvorak keyboard was what gave her the chance. When a representative of the Royal Typewriter Co. came to her business college looking for someone to train as a demonstrator of the Dvorak keyboard, she decided to give it a try.

In no time at all she was as good a typist as she was a bookkeeper and stenographer. She had won state-wide contests in the latter two fields as a high school student, but the woman who taught all three courses at Pleasant Hill "was ashamed to admit I was in her typing class," Blackburn remembered.

Carrying her own Dvorak typewriter with her wherever she worked after graduation from Business College, Blackburn's extraordinary talents paved her way. From 1939 to 1945 she worked as a legal secretary, and when she decided she needed a change of pace and left

the law firm, "I left with the reputation as the best legal secretary in Kansas City," she proudly recalled.

Suddenly there was a mad scramble of executives trying to nab her for their personal secretary.

Blackburn next worked at an electronics company, first as office manager and then as a sales engineer. She did speed typing demonstrations at the Canadian National Exposition and the Canadian Educational Conference. It was then that she was clocked for the *Guinness Book of World Records*, in which she was listed for a decade as the world's fastest typist (the category has since been removed). Blackburn went to work at State Farm Insurance in Salem, where she was employed in the word processing department until she retired in 2002.

Also, she starred in a television commercial for Apple Computers, which offered a switchable Dvorak-Qwerty keyboard with its Apple IIc model. When she was in New York to tape the commercial, she appeared on the David Letterman Show. But Letterman made a comedy routine out of what she thought was to be a serious demonstration of her typing speed, and Blackburn felt hurt by the experience. In her own words:

"The show aired on Thursday night, after I had returned back to Salem. They had taken my PR photo and blown it up to gigantic size) with the typewriter sitting on a stand (covered with a Plexiglas cover) in front of me and a little to the side with three men seated at a table with a big copy of my Thursday night paper sitting on an easel at the side. My photo took up the entire area behind the men. Letterman was standing beside the typewriter - his opening remark was "No doubt Ms. Blackburn is a very nice lady, but she has to be the biggest fraud and con artist in the world." That he is still running it about every year completely astounds me! I have a complete tape of all of my TV appearances during my publicity reign, but I REFUSE TO WATCH THE LETTERMAN FIASCO."

In the intervening years, Letterman's comedy style has become better-understood and we've grown more accustomed to it. Nevertheless, anyone who has seen her whizzing fingers in action, as well as the flawless results on paper (her error frequency is two-tenths of one percent), can have no doubt that Barbara Blackburn will forever hold her place as the world's fastest typist. Mrs. Blackburn passed away in April, 2008.

-- End --

THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS

Typing, Fastest. Mrs. Barbara Blackburn of Salem, Oregon maintained a speed of 150 wpm for 50 min (37,500 key strokes) and attained a speed of 170 wpm using the Dvorak Simplified Keyboard (DSK) system. Her top speed was recorded at 212 wpm. Source: Norris McWhirter, ed. (1985), *THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS*, 23rd US edition, New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.

Permission granted to post Article about Barbara Blackburn by Sonya Pulvers (Barbara Blackburn's daughter)

From: Sam **Sent:** 07 January 2014 22:32

To: Alison Fourie

Subject: Re: Feature article on website

Allison,

Thank you so much for asking permission. Absolutely that would be fine, my mother was an incredible woman and an icon when it comes to the world of typing.

Have a great day.

Sincerely,

Sonya Pulvers (Barbara Blackburn's daughter)

-----Original Message-----

From: Alison Fourie

Sent: Jan 7, 2014 5:22 AM

Subject: Feature article on website

Hi I would like to ask your permission to place your article about Barbara Blackburn

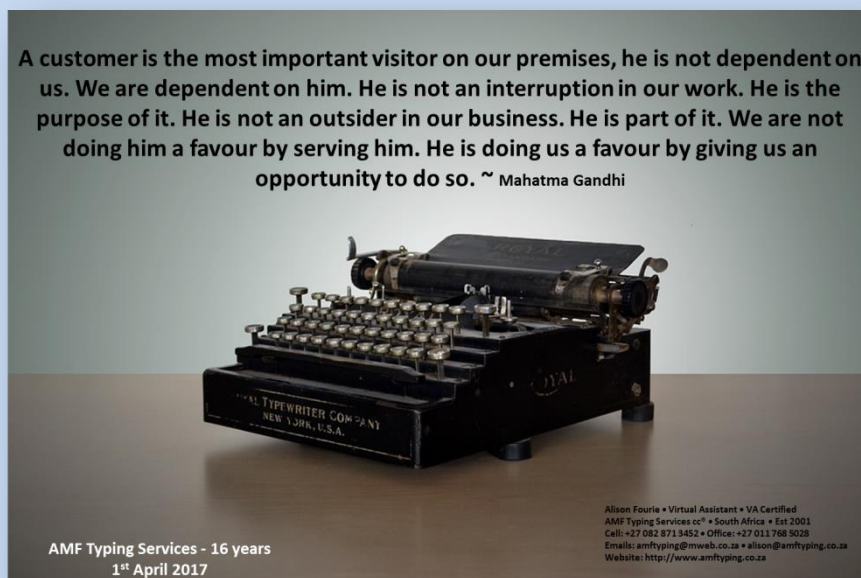
<http://rcranger.mysite.syr.edu/famhist/blackburn.htm> on my website

<http://www.amftyping.co.za>. I run a typing company and I found your article very interesting, and would love to display it on my website.

Looking forward to hearing from you. Regards Alison **AMF Typing Services**©® Est 2001

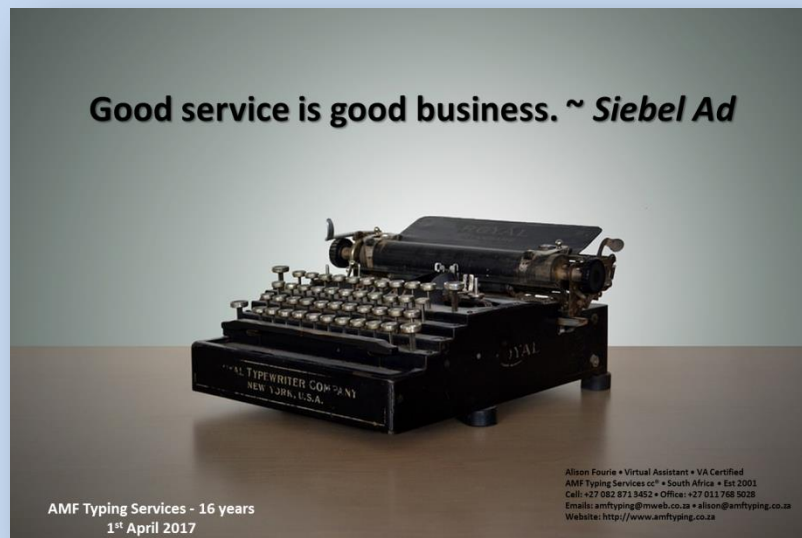
C is for Customer Service

I worked for a company for a number of years where providing a quality customer service was part of my job. I am now finding in South Africa, that no matter where you go customer service is dying. Some people are not interested in assisting customers at all, even if it is part of their jobs. It is far more important to stand and chat or to wander around, but helping customers, no way. No the wonder business is going downhill. I have always provided a Quality Customer Service and will continue to do so, but it is very disheartening to see that people just do not care enough about their jobs to provide a service to their customers. It is very sad to see here in our country.



People do not realise that providing a good service is what drives customers to a company. If I receive a bad service, I will never use your company again, why should I, it is my choice to accept a bad service or to be positive and take my business elsewhere. Today, we do not have to put up with bad service from anyone. If a person is having a bad day, that is not the customer's fault. People should not take their problems to work or take their work problems home, both are separate issues.

When you work in the service industry it is part of your job to provide a quality service to those you serve.



Characteristics of Good Customer Service

Customer service is the act of taking care of the customer's needs by providing and delivering professional, helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met. **Customer service** is meeting the needs and desires of any customer.

Some characteristics of good customer service include:

- **Promptness:** Promises for delivery of products must be on time. Delays and cancellations of products should be avoided.
- **Politeness:** Politeness is almost a lost art. Saying 'hello,' 'good afternoon,' 'sir,' and 'thank you very much' are a part of good customer service. For any business, using good manners is appropriate whether the customer makes a purchase or not.
- **Professionalism:** All customers should be treated professionally, which means the use of competence or skill expected of the professional. Professionalism shows the customer they're cared for.

- **Personalisation:** Using the customer's name is very effective in producing loyalty. Customers like the idea that whom they do business with knows them on a personal level.

Source: <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-customer-service-definition-types-role-in-marketing.html>

Next time you deal with customers make sure you provide them with a Quality Customer Service Experience. Happy customers will come back time and again.



C is for Clients

We would be nowhere as VAs without our clients. Clients are all different and we can work for a wide range of clients across the world. We are not limited to working with clients local as we don't need to see our clients to work for them.

What is important is that we get on with our clients, we build up trust and as we do that, the clients begin to see how responsible we are and therefore they can give us more and more work as they see what we can do and achieve.

As a new client contacts you, arrange a meeting in a public place or over skype via a video call etc.

Ask questions and show an interest in the clients company, their website etc, learn as much as you can about the client as that will help your working relationship.

We often as VAs draw specific clients to us, I tend to draw Trainers and these are the clients that I need as they provide me with lots of typing. I love to type and because of the clients that I draw in I always have a constant supply of typing.

Always try to turn your client into regular clients, brag about what you can do, tell the clients how you can assist them, and be pro-active and assertive. Win over the clients trust and if that client is happy with you they will come back time and again or become regular clients and they will pass on your details to other people they know and meet, who they think would be able to use your services. Word of Mouth is a great way to spread the news of your business to new potential clients.



D is for Dressing your Office

We sit for hours on end in our offices or office space so why not make that space pleasant to be in. Paint it your favourite colour, drape nice material around your space to make it look nice. Place all your equipment around you so that it is easy to get to, have your files close at hand. Things you use daily need to be close to you.

Make sure you have a comfortable chair as you sit in it all day.

Hang up nice pictures on the walls, have nice family photographs around you. Your office needs to be a pleasant place to work in.

Don't over clutter your desk, says me whose desk is a clutter mess. You can never have a big enough desk, the bigger the desk the better. Always have Post It notes handy, I have a few packs around my desk, at reach, as I use them all the time.

Put a vase of flowers on your desk. My hubby keeps me up with supply of roses from the garden.



Make sure your children know their boundaries within your office/space. Let them know what they can touch. If you have small children keep some toys, crayons and colouring books, reading books close by, this can occupy them while you are busy.

Let family know when they can interrupt you and when they can't. The family must also respect the fact that you are working and sometimes you don't want to be disturbed, especially by teenagers who

might want that favourite skirt ironed and they don't want to do it themselves, teach them independence.

Last year my hubby painted my office a nice bright peach colour, I placed nice pictures on the walls. I have placed another desk in the office so that my desk now has an L shape and I have much more room. Everything is close at hand or within reach. For the first time in years I love being in my office, my office is bright and a happy place to be in.

With our jobs we do spend a good 8+ hours in our offices so our surrounding need to be nice.



D is for Dogs

My office companions are my dogs Shaggy and Scooby. They are always with me in my office. They hurry into the office on a morning, so that the first one in, can lie under the desk. There is usually one under the desk and the other either at the side of my chair or behind my chair. Both dogs will stand and growl at each other to argue who gets to be under the desk.



The one thing that Shaggy does not like is when other's come into my office. He thinks this is his space and mine and nobody else must be in here. He can be very naughty when I have office guests.

Shaggy has eaten and chewed my clients work a few times now (very embarrassing). The papers fall to the floor without us noticing it and when we come to look for the page, here it is on the floor chewed in bits, it's a favourite hobby of Shaggy.



While we are busy working he will find something to eat and chew from the office, the carpet is mainly his target for chewing, just to be naughty as it means I must talk to him and give him attention while I am busy.

With the dogs being in the office it gives me someone to talk to during the day. I talk my frustration of the day out to the dogs. To me if I had someone in my office I would talk to them so the dogs are here, so I talk to them. If I need to work something out, say build a graphic I will talk to myself how I am going to do it and to me I am not talking to myself I'm talking to the dogs. Does anyone identify with this or is it just me. Some people have cats for company in the office, I have my dogs. Shaggy has taken it upon himself to go where I go; he follows me everywhere during the day. I have had to pull my blinds up so that both dogs can watch out of the office window, the blinds are pulled up to above Shaggy's head so that he does not damage them as he looks through the window, they love looking outside and watching down the street.

My trusty faithful dogs who listen to my daily moans and groans as I work are great company. I never feel alone at work, as I always have the dogs around.

Enjoy: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kdsxho2Cnog>

E is for Emigrating to South Africa

28 years ago on 1st February 1986 I immigrated to South Africa. In 1985 my brother-in-law came to the UK for a holiday, he suggested to me why don't I emigrate and come to South Africa, he said I would like it and to this day it has been the best step I have ever taken in my life.



I came to this country with a very positive frame of mind and I have never looked back. Before I left the UK friends were worried about me, telling me, don't I think I need to buy a gun to shoot the lions, people at the time thought lions were everywhere in South Africa, they had the perception that we lived in mud huts and made fire and cooked outside. They thought the wild animals wandered in the streets and are everywhere. I knew different and did my homework before I came here, so I knew what to expect. I knew the climate, new the work situation and new what living here would be like.



After 5 years here I took a trip back to the UK and on the plane on the way back a guy asked me was I coming here on holiday and I said no I am in fact coming home. I love this country, home is where the heart is, and mine is in South Africa.

It is a lifestyle change coming here, South Africa is very different from the UK.

Since coming to SA I am now doing my dream job of working from home, running my own business, this is something I wouldn't have thought of doing in the UK.

My aims one day are to travel and visit places in South Africa and Africa in an RV or something like that. I would love to visit places that I want to go to, the Garden Route, Game Parks, Namaqualand in the Spring, I would love to go to the wine route and sit and drink wine and have a nice lunch at a winery.



South Africa tends to get in your blood; once you have been here you will come back time and again. This is a beautiful country; the people are warm and friendly. People like to greet each other and ask each other "How are you", this is a standard greeting. I can understand why people leave South Africa with the political and crime situation but they come back so that must say something for the country.

So here is to another 28 years in South Africa.



E is for the EARLY bird who always catches the worm



My philosophy has always been 'get in first', 'be ahead of the crowd', and to 'stand out from my peers' and I do just that in South Africa. I go by the phrase 'An early Bird always catches the Worm' and I do. I have always had clients contacting me all the time and always found it easy to talk the client into using my services at my price rather than go to the next VA down the line. If I want a job I will go all out to get that job, I will convince the client of how good and how I am able to assist. My office has a continuous flow of typing and my main service that I offer clients is Typing. If it can be typed I can do it. I am very old school and I find that saying this to clients helps draw them to using my services.

I started out wanting to run a typing company and never thought I would get to this point, but I've done it and proved that you can run a company just doing typing. I know where to look for my clients, if I want to take on more clients, I know how to get clients and am not afraid to sell my services and tell clients how good I am at what I do.

I answer emails fast, as an email comes in and I see that it's from a prospective client I then quickly respond, clients are impressed with a fast response, they want a VA who is pro-active and assertive.

I love the variety that I get with typing. You would think typing would be boring, typing the same thing over and over, yet I don't I have such a variety in typing from PowerPoint presentations to graphs, tables, charts, and graphics. This is the job I always wanted to do.

Be like me and be the early bird that catches the worm. The faster you respond the better chance to get the prospective client.

F is for Fighting

We as VAs are always fighting something within our jobs. We fight to get paid, we fight to get our deadlines finished and we fight to find good subcontractors. Fighting is part of our jobs. For many VAs it can be a battle to get paid, often on completion of a task, we then struggle to get our payments. We do the work, giving the client an excellent service then the client decides they don't want to pay or had no intention of paying in the first place and they simply want the job done for free.



Some VAs are so busy that they fight to make their deadlines. This is one of my problems, I juggle my time between clients to make sure everyone's work gets done and try my hardest to meet the deadlines which are not always possible. This is when time management skills come in handy, I have to stop, relook at what I have, look to see which piece of work I can get done quickly and then redo my to-do-list and start again.



Finding good subcontractors is a battle. Everyone wants to subcontract but not everyone is good and that is where the problem lies. We take on a subcontractor as they are so enthusiastic to assist and then when the job is returned and here is just one example proofreading has not been done. This makes our jobs more difficult as we are using subcontractors as we need the assistance, as maybe we are too busy, then we must stop

what we are doing and proofread the work. Anyone no matter who you work for, your work must be proofread, nobody is too good that they should not proof their work, you either proof as you go or do a proof when you are finished but it is part of your job to proof any work that has been typed. Things like this slow down our production.

These are just 3 tasks that I have chosen to show that our job is about fighting to get things done; can you associate with any of them?

F is for Forward



Don't look back but go forward. When something is done, it's time to move on, put it behind you and move onto the next thing. As VAs we continually must move forward. When we start out our journey to become Virtual Assistants we have to keep going forward to achieve what we set out to achieve and that is to become successful VA, with a full client list and to be working 5 days a week, 8 hours a day that is our goal. We have many hitches along the way but we pick ourselves up again and move forward each time. No job is plain sailing; there are always obstacles in our way.



An easy way forward is to do things in steps, take things one step at a time, we can't do everything, but, we can achieve little things as we go along and using steps to do things makes it simpler and not as overwhelming as we think things are. I know it's very overwhelming to start up a VA business.

When you start your business and you don't have any clients and with marketing and a positive attitude you can look for clients and when you find 1 or more you go forward. From

nothing to something is going forward. From earning nothing to earning something is going forward. Earning small to more is forward. A sustained business is going forward and growing it, is going forward. Your life from nothing to something is going forward, something for you to think about:

Quote:

Go back?" he thought. "No good at all! Go sideways? Impossible! Go forward? Only thing to do! On we go!" So up he got, and trotted along with his little sword held in front of him and one hand feeling the wall, and his heart all of a patter and a pitter. [J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*](#)

F is for Forums

Do many of you belong to Forums? I belong to quite a few. I don't take part as I don't have the time, but I do read all the posts and then file them.

Belonging to a forum is like being part of the VA family; you get to know everyone on the forum. It is a great place to discuss work problems, issues, advice, software problems, advertise events, courses etc. It is a great place to spread industry news and to keep up with what is happening in the industry of VAs.



For the emailed based forums I belong to, I keep folders within outlook so that I can save the forum posts as you never know when you might experience problems that others have already experienced and mentioned on the forums, it's easy to look back over the forum posts and find help to my problems.

Forums are an excellent way of communicating with groups of people, especially so in the working environment. You can join forums of the groups of people you would like to work for, build/earn trust and get new clients from the forum. Become a part of forums and share your ideas with everyone.

Gayner Paynter and I run our own forum called Tavasa (The Transcriptionists and Virtual Assistants of South Africa). Tavasa Online Forum

<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/tavasa/>

Subscribe: tavasa-subscribe@yahoogroups.com (free membership).



We share news, job leads, subcontractor positions, articles and information about the industry. The forum is open and we do discuss rates at times, issues can get heated on the forum but that is the way it is, sometimes people need to let off steam and Tavasa forum is a great place to do that. Everyone is invited to join our forum, we have members from around the world.

Do you belong to forums?

G is for Google



Google is an American multinational corporation specialising in Internet related services and products. These include search, cloud computing, software and online advertising technologies.

Founded: 4th September 1998

Founders: Larry page and Sergey Brin

Where would I be without Google!

Google is my favourite search engine. I use Internet Explorer and Chrome and have Google search engine set on both, it's easier having it set on both as I just go straight into google and can get about doing what I need to.

When looking for graphics I go into Google Images, to me this is the easiest way to find graphics when I have a particular theme that I must find.

I use **Google Scholar** a lot. I have clients that have taken their Masters and now doing their PhD's. I use scholar to search for articles. I search for strings of words to find the articles that I require. There are tons of articles that you can find, scholar is a database for articles and very useful to students.

My daughter uses **Google Translate** for her Afrikaans homework, she uses it to do the basics, and then my hubby will reword her work to make it make sense. But she can at least start the process by using Translate.

Gmail is the best free email tool to use, nearly everyone you meet has a Gmail account. You can use it and access your email from any place or destination, so you can never be without access to your emails. Gmail can be accessed on your phone, tablet, pc or laptop.

I use **Google Search Engine** for all my internet research requirements; Google is always my starting point.

Google Earth is so interesting; it can be used for star gazing, to viewing the surface of Mars and the Moon. I use google earth to see where my family lives overseas.

Google Docs is a great way to share documents between yourself and your client. Load the documents to google docs and your client will have instant access and you both will be able to edit the work and both be updated at the same time.



Google has many uses and is a great friend to Virtual Assistants, where would we be without it.

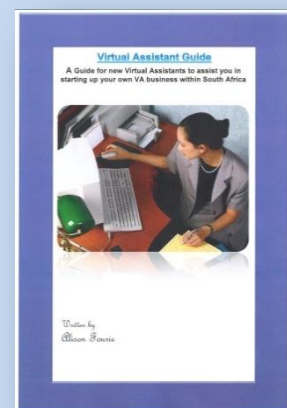
G is for Good News

As VAs the best thing we can receive is good news. Often good news comes in the form of a new client. We spent weeks doing marketing and advertising and then one day the phone rings and someone is enquiring about virtual assistant services. As you answer the phone and you are asked can you assist, the first thing you do is panic, and I think every VA does this the first few times, till you get used to it.



This is when you have to come across as being very confident and you need to know what you are talking about. As the client asks you can you assist, you can start to ask questions about what the client requires you to do. Ask as many questions that come into your head. What you can do to be prepared for this by having a list of questions ready by you for that 'just in case a client calls time'. Have a list of questions ready for the services that you are going to offer so that you ask the right questions. When you have asked all your questions start to get to know the client, ask them about what they do, what is their company called, do they have a company website, ask can they send you a company brochure.

Show interest in the client and not just at the task at hand. Be enthusiastic and let it show in your voice. Clients love a friendly approach, it shows that you have confidence in what you are doing and offering. Don't be shy to offer the client advice if you think your advice can help them further. Have a one minute speech on hand to explain what a virtual assistant does and how we can assist clients. Don't make it any longer than 1 minute as phone calls cost money, you don't want to preach about the industry, but, you do want to get the point across how we can assist the client.



Once you get your first client usually many follow. It is just getting that one client to call. If you have done all your marketing and advertising, been out networking and networking online you should hear good news soon.

G is for Growing

Everybody and everything needs to grow and so your company needs to grow. It is through continual marketing, advertising and networking that your business will grow. You can't just open up your business and start to work; it does not work like that, **'You have to do the work to get the work'**. Marketing, advertising and networking is always going to be a major part of the life of your business.



Everybody and everything needs to grow and so your company needs to grow. It is through continual marketing, advertising and networking that your business will grow. You can't just open up your business and start to work; it does not work like that, **'You have to do the work to get the work'**. Marketing, advertising and networking is always going to be a major part of the life of your business.

You need to grow your client database to bring in enough work to make a profit. Businesses must run making profits otherwise what is the point. Your rates need to be enough that they cover your expenses and that there is a bit left over for profit. You don't want to just break-even you need to make profits to survive. If you charge low rates and you won't be in business for long. Often VAs think that if they charge low rates they will draw in many clients, do you want the types of clients that go for the low rates or do you want the type of client that pays you well and appreciates what you and they become regular clients and they know you are a valuable resource to them.

As we grow we need to make sure that our advertising material grows with us. Update your material often, don't just send out the same advert over and over, create something new each time, maybe boast about a new product you learnt, or a new client you have just got, advertise a new skill you have just learnt, maybe you have joined a new group advertise it., you could interest others to join that group. Send advertise out regularly. The same with your website change it often, your website should not look the same today as when you started out, and your website grows with you, keeps it fresh, updated and keeps up with current website trends. If you add new content to your site send out an advert advertising it, send out on your social media platforms and invite people to your site to check it out.

Our businesses have to grow for us to achieve anything, the same as we need to keep up with technology, technology changes all the time, so do we, never let your business go stagnant no matter how busy you are, keep it fresh and ongoing.

I don't need to advertise for clients, but I do need to advertise to show that I am still in business. Your business name must always be out there to be seen.

H is for Husband

The husband must understand what the VA concept is. It is a work from home business, working full time for clients and being busy. A VA can work at any time as required and they don't have time wasted in travelling. It is a full time work concept which means if a VA has full time clients they will have a full day of work. The VAs who has not achieved this as yet, has still got full time work to do by getting her business up and ready for clients. Smaller clients bring smaller work at different times or marketing or research makes it full time. With school going kids there is always someone at home during the day.

VAs also needs the proper tools to do this work which means a good pc, decent printer and reliable Internet access. With proper tools VAs stand a better chance of getting themselves out in the business world with marketing and advertising to get work? Internet communication is how most of the work is done.

The husband must also support a VA in times when there is no work, with a positive mind-set, work will come in and the VA must keep on trying, never giving up. When there is a lot of work anytime is possible for the VA to work. The husband will have to step up and help with the kids, if there are any, or with food and mealtimes, assist so that the VA can finish the work earlier and quicker.

The husband's role is to support and assist where needed with home things, kids or mealtimes and also with the business until it is up and running or well established. A different view is sometimes needed to move the business forward and the husband might be able to help, husbands are great to brainstorm with and to get fresh ideas for the business.

Written by: Andreas Benjamin Fourie

H is for Housework



I run a full time VA business with many clients, I do not have time for housework, so I have a maid 'Lettie' that comes in twice a week, she cleans up, hooovers, irons etc.

I do my own washing, when I get up first thing in the morning, I take the washing basket to the scullery and put in a load, I have a quick program that take 29 minutes, the minute the washing is finished I hang it out to dry, I do this daily and as there is 4 of us we have a lot of washing, especially the teenage kids. I also will turn on the dishwasher every morning. When I finished working in the corporate world I bought a dish washer as I knew it was something I would need if I was to work from home full time, it's the best buy I ever made. I do, do dishes if there are only a few sometimes, if I have time.

The kids do specific tasks daily, taking turns, they empty the dishwasher, get the washing in off the line, feed the dogs, lay the table for supper, peel potatoes (if we have), these tasks are shared and they do it no problem. This helps me a lot. My hubby cooks the meat and I prepare the veggies and what we are having with, sometimes I just have to prepare and put in little dishes and my hubby will cook whatever I want cooked. If I am going to use my slow cooker then I quickly prepare and turn it on later in the day to cook. Slow Cooker another great buy for a busy work at home mum.

We both work, so we share what we do. We are suppose too make our own beds and if the kids don't make theirs then it is tough, they sleep in them the way they are, they are big enough to make their own beds and if they don't want to, that is not my problem. They make their own lunch when they come home from school if they want lunch, they are capable. We have a routine where everything gets done and by sticking to the routine everything works out great. If I have to work late or work weekends, my hubby will cook the whole supper and see to the kids. If my hubby is home he will prepare lunch for us all. By us

working together in the house, I am able to meet deadlines and work extra time if needed after hours.

I always found it very hard to do housework and also to work full time as a VA, it just didn't work and the housework didn't get done as work must always come first. So we now have a balanced household and everything works and we all know what we have to do to make it work. Sharing is caring and that is what it is about in our house. Everyone will muck in and help when needed.

How do things work in your household with you working full time as a VA?

I is for Internet Research for Clients

Internet Research as a Service

An interesting service to offer to clients is Internet Research.

You will research information on the Internet for clients. The types of clients who would use this information can be people who offer course/training material and require course information. Authors who need research for books they write. Students need research on subjects that they do their Masters, MBA, and PhD degrees for. There are many other people who also require research.

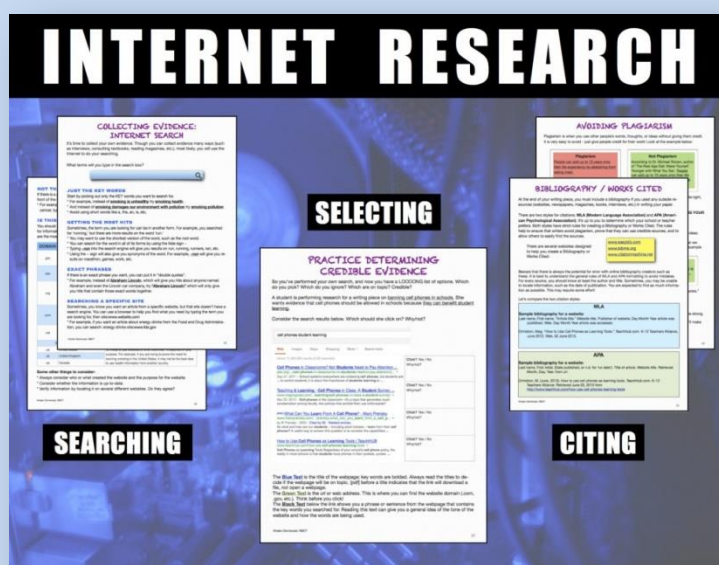
A client will give you a subject that they need the research on and they will ask you to find specific data on that subject. My starting point when I do research is to start by doing a Google search on the topic/subject. Keep track of what you are doing; record the time you start to do your research and the time you finish. I normally take a few

hours or more. Open a document and record everywhere you look, take a copy of the website URL address and place it in your document and if you find the information you need, you copy it into your document. If you find pdf information then you can usually send the pdf to your email address and then copy it into your document or forward it to your clients for their information.

With doing Internet Research you have to sort of think like your client, get as much information as possible from them about what it is they really want, ask questions, show that you are interested in finding the information they require.

I very rarely will spend under an hour doing research so therefore I charge my hourly rate when doing this; it can be charged in 15 to 20 minutes increments. Programs to record your information can be MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote.

It is very time consuming doing research, I normally will do a few hours, and then if I come up with nothing which does happen, I take a break, and then start again later. It is pointless going on if you are not finding the information you need, take a break and start again.



Student Research

When doing research for Students for degrees etc:

- Go into Google, press **more**, then press **even more**, then go into **Scholar**. This is where you will search for articles on the subjects that your student is writing their thesis/assignment/dissertation etc.
- Copy information you find into your word document also copying your website URL address.
- With student research and finding articles you must make sure you copy the article references as this will be used within their thesis/assignments etc. Some articles can be copied, some are available in pdf format, and you can send these to yourself and your student in email format. There is often always a link with pdf articles to send via email.
- Here is an example of the referencing that you must make sure you copy with any articles you take with your research.

Examples:

This reference will be placed within their document text. Treux, D. (1996)

This reference will be placed in the reference listing: Treux, D. (1996). *Qualitative research method panel: The merits of three qualitative research methods, discourse analysis*. Georgia: Georgia State University.

This reference will be placed within their document text. Van der Reit, M. & Boettiger, M (2009)

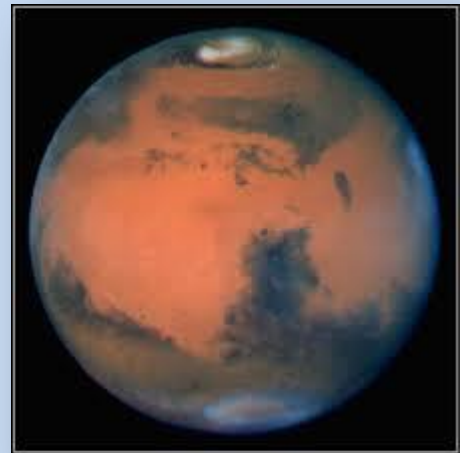
This reference will be placed in the reference listing: Van der Reit, M. & Boettiger, M. (2009).

Shifting research dynamics: Addressing power and maximising participation through participatory research techniques in participatory research. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 39(1):1-18.



I is for Internet and I could work on Mars, if I could get there.

I was thinking mayhap I should have applied to go to Mars (<http://www.mars-one.com/>) after all as a VA I can work anywhere. Trouble is if I go to Mars I might have Internet and communication problems and then what, I have enough Internet problems as it is. Will someone go to Mars one day and be the first VA on Mars, I wonder.



I don't think I would manage on Mars. I need my communication and if I didn't have it I would struggle. I like skype; if I couldn't contact people I would be lost. I could work for some of my clients as we correspond via WhatsApp and email, so that is something I would need to have. Communication is big deal to me in my business. What if Communication or the Internet goes down on Mars, how will I communicate with my clients? I would lose business very quickly, on Earth we can just about manage as long as we have communication soon but if it went off on Mars who knows when we may get it up again and that could be a problem. I would have to take one of my clients with me to Mars as she would be lost without me, simple as that. I couldn't leave her here, so she would have to come with otherwise she probably would not let me go.

How do we know what communication would be like on Mars seen as we have not had human's set foot on Mars yet, it's an unknown world.

There could be a communication delay and how would that work with doing urgent work or even transferring files via Dropbox, could I get that on Mars, I wonder. Would I be able to be in touch with Postnet to send info via Dropbox for printing? These would be factors I would need to find out before thinking of going to Mars.



I certainly could work for a new colony of people on Mars as a VA surely, especially if I am the only VA on Mars in the colony! How would I charge for my services, would we use money on Mars, I certainly wouldn't want to work for free. You see there is many dilemma's in the way, before even thinking of going to Mars.

The Internet is not reliable here, how do I know it will be reliable on Mars. Do I take a chance and just go and see, hmmm. I think maybe I should just dream about being the first VA on Mars, it might be a better idea than going there.

I is for Internet



The Internet, we as VAs depend on it so much for every aspect of our work. Most tasks we do are online Internet related. Our communication is Internet based, be it email, skype, google apps etc. When the Internet goes offline that is when we panic. We cannot send emails, we cannot use skype etc. We are actually lost when the Internet goes down, it's as if our whole world has fallen apart, that type of panic situation it is and how it affects us.



You cannot send your work to your client, you cannot upload or download files that you need to work on. You can't do internet research that you need to do for a client. Social media comes to a halt, you cannot access Facebook, Linked in, Twitter, and you cannot look for images for the graphic you need to create. You can't access your website, can't check your mail. It has such a profound effect on us. Often it is a problem that is out of our hands to fix, we have to wait for our service providers to fix the problem.

But we can fix this problem by using Inverters and Battery power these items help us stay online and to have power during power outages, surges cuts in power, load shedding and storms. By using the equipment available we can still have Internet, email, wireless and

ADSL coverage when needed. This below is what I have done to makes sure that I can still work during power problems:

I is for Inverter



Load Shedding during winter is a way of life for us, but we can beat it. There is technology out there that we can buy. I have recently purchased an Inverter and Battery. An Inverter is driven by a large battery and can be used on mains or run on the battery, in a power cut the battery kicks in and keeps the Inverter charged. My equipment is plugged into the Inverter so I have power continuous with or without the mains.

By connecting all my equipment to the Inverter I can now keep my office up and running during hours of load shedding, while still having full Internet access which is another bonus. My equipment should stay up and running for between 4 to 6 hours.

With Load Shedding lately it is no longer just 2 hours off, it is now a case of up to 4 to 6 hours off with no electricity. We suffer as we cannot get our work done, clients are waiting for work and it is not very professional for us to say 'sorry but I cannot work I have no power'.

When load shedding occurs we often don't get the time to switch off and if you have not saved your work in the last hour you can easily lose that work, that is an hour wasted which we would have to redo. There is nothing worse than losing something and having to redo it, its time wasting we can't afford.

With most of my work I am running on deadline and I simply cannot afford the time to be without power anymore. So a plan has been made. It has been costly but it is worth it because it keeps me up and running working while the power is off. I can still delivery my work on schedule and that is what matters to me. It is all about client support and keeping the client happy.



I is for Indian Street Typists

Vanishing professions: India's street typists heading for a final full stop

By Rahul Tandon BBC News, Calcutta

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25620755>



Vanishing professions

Every morning, as he has for the past 34 years, Ajay Kumar Nayak walks to a busy footpath outside Calcutta's high court.

He sets up a rickety wooden table, places a battered plastic chair behind it and then carefully places his 15-year-old typewriter on the table.

After covering his desk with a piece of tarpaulin to protect his prized possession from the sun, he is ready for business as one of Calcutta's few remaining street typists.

"A decade ago I would have had no time to sit and chat. My fingers would have been tapping away all day," he says.

"All you would have heard was the sound of the typewriter. Now there is only silence."

He pauses for a minute and points to the few other typists who remain on the street - one is sitting sipping a cup of tea; another is reading a newspaper.

"Look at us. We have nothing to do," says Ajay.

"If you come back in a few years' time there will be nobody left here. The computer has killed our profession."

Next year will be the last year that we run typing classes”

Mohammed Quamar Hamid Suffee Commercial College

Ajay and his friends used to be busy dealing with all sorts of documents.

Love letters

Complex legal drafts were their staple work, but there would also be wedding card messages to type or CVs to update.

They all laugh as they tell me how some young men used to ask them to type out love letters.

"Maybe we should start offering divorce letters," jokes one. "Maybe that could help us get some work."

Their conversation stops for a moment as a potential client walks towards them, but after a moment he moves on, and their conversation resumes.



A few miles from the high court is the Suffee Commercial College. For the past 80 years young men and women have come here to learn how to type.

On the ground floor there is still a darkened classroom full of Remington typewriters, perched idly on wooden desks, but they are rarely used now.

'What's the point?'



"Next year will be the last year that we run typing classes," says Mohammed Quamar Hamid, whose family have been running the college since it was established.

"There is no demand for it, and when I ask the youngsters to practise their keyboard skills on these typewriters they just look at me and say, 'what is the point?'"

He asks me to follow him to another room. Inside is a row of computers and in front of them is a group of young girls in their early 20s.

"For them to get a job in India's competitive job market they need computer skills," he says.

"Nobody uses a typewriter any more. In a few years' time the only place you will see them is in a museum."

Students do not want to learn typing any more, says Mohammed Quamar Hamid

The girls all nod their heads in agreement. One student, Neha, who has just scored 97% in her computer keyboard skills test, says manual typewriters "are not practical any more".

"Today so much has to be done in the office, and with a computer it's easy to correct your mistakes," she says.

There are only old men here now. There are no youngsters here"

Ajay Kumar Nayak Street typist

Being a street typist is something she says she "would never do".

"I think that we should keep abreast with technology and not look backwards. Typewriters are not part of our scene anymore."

When I ask the class whether any of them think they will ever use typewriters, the answer is a resounding no.

Another student, Divya, speaks for the class when she says: "It is so hard to use. That is why we all prefer computers. We want an easy life."

Final few hundred

Back outside the high court, Ajay Kumar Nayak has finally got a client.

But after he finishes typing up the legal document - for which he gets seven rupees (7p, 11 cents) a page - he and his friends resume their conversation.

In Calcutta 20 years ago, there were about 2,000 street typists; now there are only a few hundred left.



Typewriter-filled classrooms like this are disappearing

Ajay took the job because he could find no other work. He says he would not advise anyone to follow his example.

"There are only old men here now. There are no youngsters here."

"I even told my son not to join this profession as it is difficult to make a living on the streets now."

It is time for him to go home after another largely fruitless day.

As I walk away he shouts out: "Come and see me soon. I and my friends may not be here for much longer."

[Business Daily](#) [BBC World Service](#)

J is for Just a Secretary

“JUST A” SECRETARY



"If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." – Dr Wayne Dyer

Early in my career as a secretary I received a phone call where the caller really didn't want to speak to "*just a secretary*". I never realised what a profound statement that was until I heard myself repeating the very same words to another caller.

Wow! What an easy way out! Then I realised that I wasn't really being very fair to myself or my chosen career. By classing oneself as a "*just a*" that is all you will be and that is where you will stay. Once I thought about it I realised that I definitely wasn't "*just a*", what I realised was I was so much more.

When I did my secretarial training I was taught how to type which included different layouts of letters and documents; English and Afrikaans comprehension; Office Administration and Computer Skills. We weren't taught what I think today could be some of the most important skills that a secretary needs on a daily basis. Some of these skills include being approachable, someone that people want to talk to. I find myself sharing a joke or story to break the tension in a very stressful day, then a counsellor helping with grief and in the next minute your valued opinion is requested on how a procedure works.

You need to be able to communicate with the tea lady, driver, supervisor right up to top management without being condescending or clueless.

We are not taught training skills and this is something that lands in your lap all too frequently and if you are not confident with public speaking this task can be an extremely daunting experience not to mention nerve wracking.

Dealing with different personalities on a daily basis can be fascinating. I remember one of my rather boisterous and temper fuelled sub-contractors coming into the office one day and

it literally looked like he had steam coming out his ears. I calmly asked him not once but three times to sit down until he was able to articulate why he was so angry. At the end of it all there really wasn't a problem just miscommunication however because I took the time to calm him, find out what the issue was and basically give him the attention he needed he left a much happier person perhaps not with the situation at hand however with the treatment that he had received and that someone was willing to listen to him.

Now he phones on a daily basis (sometimes twice) just to complain, I tell him he speaks to me more than his wife who I can hear having a laugh in the background. These are the relationships you forge over time and as each person is an individual you learn to deal with them individually.

When I started work at my current employer I would tell people I don't know how to do that yet, but that I would learn and now I find that I am no longer "*just a*".

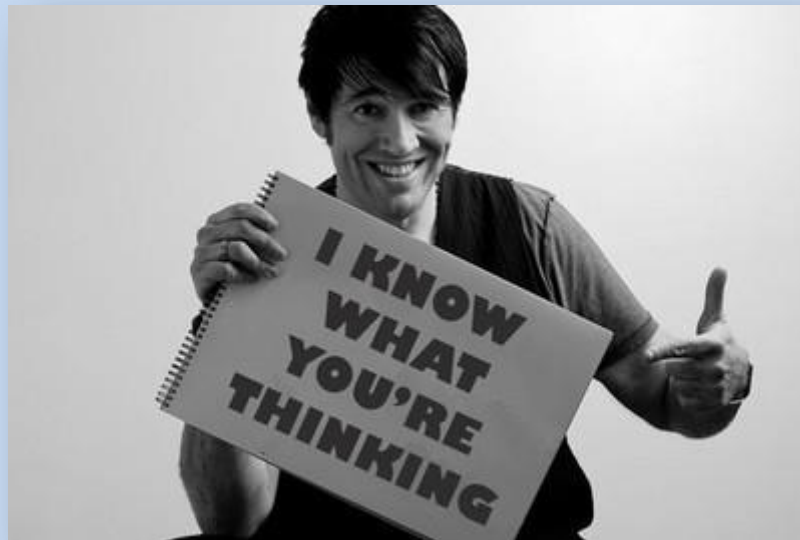


Written by: Briony Winslet

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M is for Mind Reading

Does anyone ever have to perform mind-reading of their clients? If you do, I would love to hear your stories amftyping@mweb.co.za. I bet you can relate to this if you have been working with some of your clients for years and you have gotten to know them.



Well how do you perform mindreading on your client. I often put myself into my client's shoes and think what will they do. If I need to create a graphic from a few words, I will think what would the client want, not how would I do it, how and what do they actually want. I sometimes like to keep one step ahead of the client, so thinking what they would do in a given situation I often can do this. It's called really knowing your clients and as VAs we work closely with our clients, the more we know about them the more we can assist them in help in more ways to make life easier for them, after all that is what is important, is keeping the client happy.

M is for Music

At High School I learnt to type. We were taught on old Remington manual and electronic typewriters. We started off being taught the basics typing:

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog, this sentence contains all the letters of the alphabet so it's the best sentence to use where you learn each key and its position, when you are learning to type.



Does anyone in my age groups remember typing this? We typed it over and over and this is how we learnt how to touch type. Eventually the keys were covered by a piece of paper and we were timed to record our typing speeds.

Our typing teacher taught us to type to music and to keep up with the beat of the music as we typed. I can't remember what the music but know it was different tunes. It was a fun way to learn how to type at different speeds.

I was taught to type the 'old school' way, typing using all 8 fingers and 2 thumbs, learning to type using all your fingers enables you to be able to type much quicker than someone who types using a few fingers.

I have loved typing since my school days but never thought I would end up one day running my own Typing Company. Being able to earn money doing something that I love to do.

N is for Negativity

Negativity does not bring results. The more negative you are the less things will happen to you. Here are 10 ways to defend yourself against negativity:

1. **Don't take other people's negativity personally.** Most negative people behave negatively not just to you, but to everyone they interact with. What they say and do is a projection of their own reality – their own attitude. Even when a situation seems personal – even if someone insults you directly – it oftentimes has nothing to do with you. Remember, what others say and do, and the opinions they have, are based entirely on their own self-reflection.
2. **Spend more time with positive people.** You are the average of the people you spend the most time with. In other words, who you spend your time with has a great impact on the person you eventually become. If you are around cynical and negative people all the time, you will become cynical and negative. Does who you are and who you want to be reflect in the company you keep? Start spending time with nice people who are smart, driven and likeminded. Relationships should help you, not hurt you. Surround yourself with people who reflect the person you want to be. Choose friends who you are proud to know, people you admire, who love and respect you, people who make your day a little brighter simply by being in it.
3. **Be the positivity you want to see in the world.** Lead by example. You can't always save the world, but you can make the world a better place by practicing what you preach – by becoming self-aware, tapping into your compassion, and protecting your positive space. Doing simple things like talking about positive daily events, common friends, hobbies, happy news, make for light conversations with negative people. Keep the conversations focused on optimistic areas the person can relate to. You can disarm their negativity, even if it's just for a little while.
4. **Change the way you think.** The one thing nobody can take away from you is the way you choose to respond to what others say and do. The problem isn't the events that are negative. The problem is the way you react to those events. The last of your freedoms is to choose your attitude in any given circumstance. Complaining, blaming and criticizing aren't going to change the situation. It is not always easy to find



happiness in ourselves, but it is always impossible to find it elsewhere. Regardless of the situation you face, your attitude is your choice. Remember, you can't have a positive life with a negative attitude. When negativity controls your thoughts, it limits your behaviour, actions, and opportunities. If you realized how powerful your thoughts were, you would never think another negative thought again.

5. **Focus on solutions.** Negative people have an endless supply of pity party invitations. Don't RSVP. Often time's people use negativity as a barrier to protect them from the world, which in turn blocks them from solutions that could improve their life. Instead, identify solutions. Don't dwell too much on what went wrong. Instead, focus on the next positive step. Spend your energy on moving forward toward a positive resolution. Remember, when you focus on solutions, by thinking and acting positively, sound becomes music, movement becomes dance, a smile becomes laughter, and life becomes a celebration.
6. **Love whoever is around to be loved.** Practice acts of kindness. It's a lot harder to be negative when you're in the presence of love and kindness. Be that presence whenever possible. Let your guard down. Talk to someone you don't know straight from your heart. Compliment them. Don't anticipate awkwardness. Just be you in that beautiful way only you know, and give them the chance to smile and connect with you. Sometimes a kind word and some attention from a friend is all that's needed to turn a negative attitude around.
7. **Provide support when it makes sense.** Some people complain as a way of crying for help. They may not be conscious of it though, so their comments come across as negative complaints rather than requests. Show some concern. Just a simple "Are you okay?" or "Is there anything I can do to help you?" can do wonders. Resist the urge to judge or assume. It's hard to offer compassion when you assume you have them figured out. Let them know they are not alone. People overcome the forces of negative emotions, like anger and hatred, when the counter-forces of love and support are in full effect.
8. **Realize that life is a series of ups and downs.** Acknowledge the negativity, accept it, and let it pass through your consciousness, thereby teaching you a lesson but not ruining your day. Life is full of highs and lows, but you don't have to go up and down

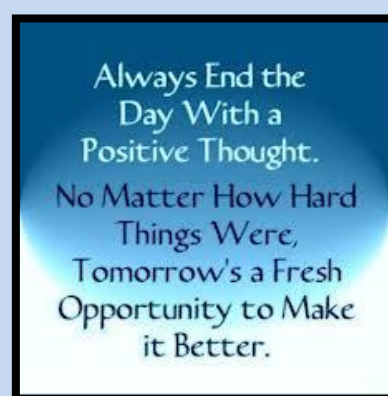


with them. We develop from the negatives when we accept them and learn from them. This cycle is all part of the human experience. Relax, let go a little, and enjoy the ride.

9. **Concentrate on today.** Too often, we carry around things from our past that hurt us – regrets, shame, anger, pain, etc. Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. Don't let these negative points from the past rob your present happiness. You had to live through these things in the past, and although unfortunate, they can't be changed. But if the only place they live today is in your mind, then let go, move on, and be happy. You can decide right now that negative experiences from your past will not predict your future.
10. **Let go and move on when you must.** If all else fails, remove yourself from the wrong situations and relationships. Some people are like dark clouds; when they disappear, it's a brighter day. Know when it's time to let go. Letting go of negative people doesn't mean you hate them, it just means that you care about your own wellbeing. Every time you subtract negative from your life, you make room for more positive.

It isn't easy to remain positive when negativity surrounds you, but remember that you have full control of your attitude. Think of it this way: An entire body of water the size of the Pacific Ocean can't sink a ship unless it gets inside the ship. Similarly, all the negativity in the world can't bring you down unless you allow it to get inside your head. People who are able to discern the positive points in negative situations are the ones who prosper in the long run. So defend yourself against the 'negative way' and make room for a positive day.

<http://www.marcandangel.com/2012/08/08/10-ways-to-defend-yourself-against-negativity/>



O is for Oz Typewriter Museum

The OzTypewriter Museum, Canberra

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Oztypewriterblogspotcom/278666205527104>

<http://oztypewriter.blogspot.com/>

This is a great website to visit. It is all about the history and development of typewriters from 1714 to 2014. It is like an encyclopaedia on Typewriters.

A few excerpts from <http://oztypewriter.blogspot.com/>

The 1893 Chicago World's Fair - the Columbian Exposition - is best known to typewriter lovers today for the launch of the Blickensderfer typewriter. Back then, it had very special significance of a different kind for at least one [Remington] typewriter lover - sex counsellor and free speech and women's rights pioneer Ida Craddock.

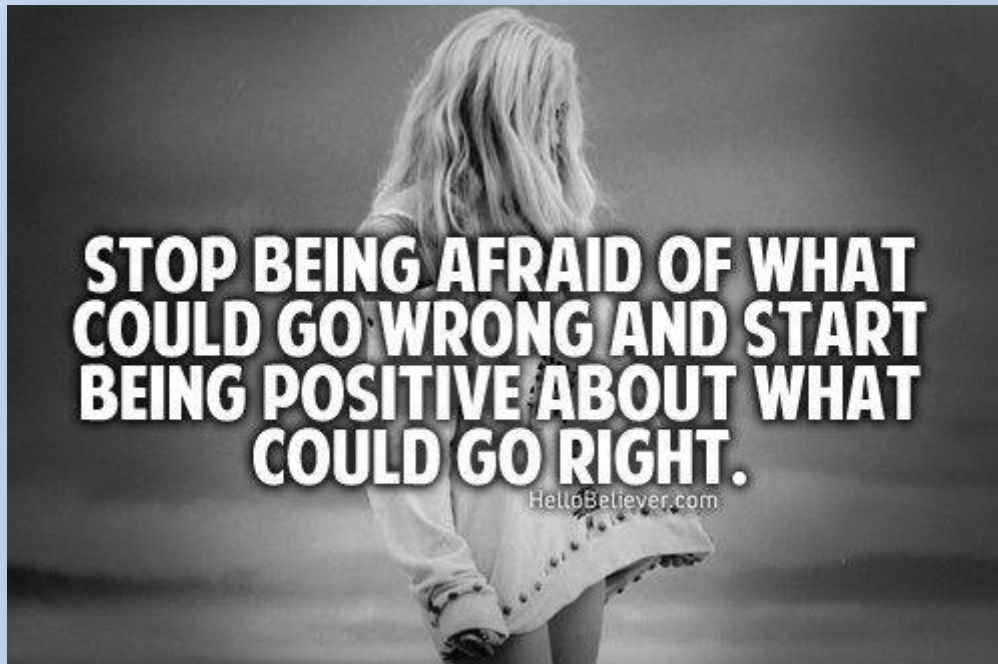
What an exciting typewriter day it turned out to be. It started out with a friend tipping me off about some interesting information in typewriter history. Then it only got a lot better. I rarely go to the Canberra Recycling Centre on Mugga Lane any longer, even though it is the site of some of my fondest memories of typewriter scores. But I was looking for another cheap typewriter display cabinet and the Salvos and Vinnies didn't have what I was after. So I ventured a little further afield.

Typewriter info websites taken from <http://oztypewriter.blogspot.com/>

- [The Classic Typewriter Page \(Richard Polt\)](#)
- [Machines of Loving Grace \(Alan Seaver\)](#)
- [Typewriters by Will Davis](#)
- [Portable Typewriters \(Richard Milton\)](#)
- [The Virtual Typewriter Museum \(Paul Robert\)](#)
- [The Chestnut Ridge Typewriter Museum \(Herman Price\)](#)
- [typewriter.be \(Wim Van Rompuy\)](#)
- [typewriter.ch \(Georg Sommeregger\)](#)
- [Antique Typewriters \(Martin Howard\)](#)
- [Typewriters \(Arnold Betzwieser\)](#)

P is for Positivity

With a positive frame of mind we can achieve anything.



Having a positive mind-set can make or break a business. I believe the more positive you are in your business the more good things will happen in the business and the more rewards will come your way. In the beginning of my business I was very negative as nothing was happening. My husband used to be on my back because of the negativity and the more negative I was the more nothing happened. I managed to turn my negativity into a positive and then things started to happen in my business. So to me it is all about your mind-set, your attitude and your thoughts. It works for me. I believe in the Laws of Attraction, The Secret, it works.

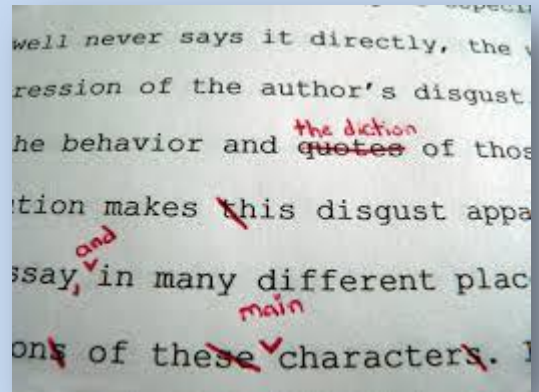
For every negative thought you have, think of more positive thoughts, to replace the negative thoughts.

P is for Proofreading

Proofreading and checking your work before submission to the client

Clients have tight deadlines, so to assist clients we need to know how long specific tasks take to complete and the client needs to know what is involved.

If you have plain copy typing, (an example would be a book with just text), if you work full time you could probably do between 15 and 20 pages per day, that is just the typing, at the end of the document you will also need to put it through a spell check, which takes a few minutes you then need to follow up with a check by yourself of reading through the text for any missed errors or mistakes (proofreading), this can take a while and needs to be added into the amount of time it takes to complete the task. Do not tell the client you can type 100 pages in a week (5 working days) because then you are leaving yourself with no proofing time, surely you need to proof and check your work before sending it back and this time must be featured in.



Practice proofing so that you know how long it takes you, so that you can give the client a better idea of reaching their deadline or if the deadline needs to change to feature this in. Proof read a page of text and with doing this you should be able to give the client an idea of how long your proofing takes.

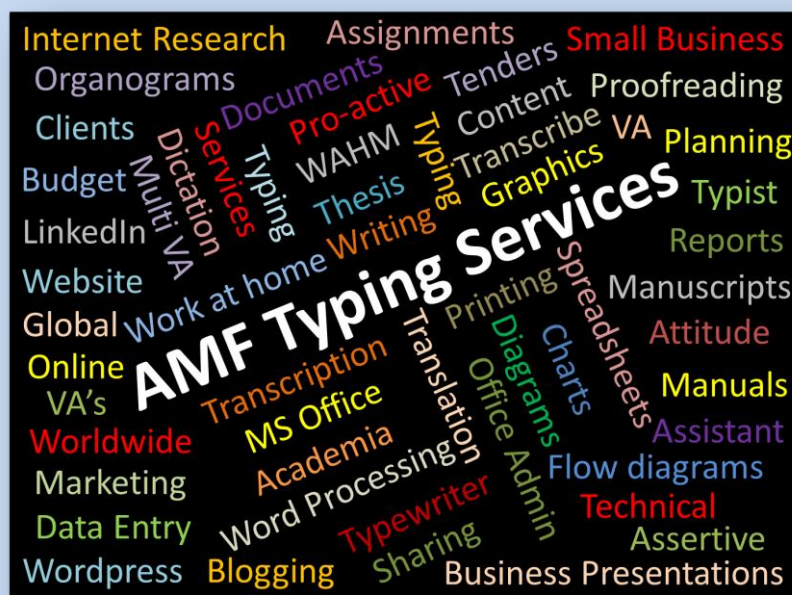
Transcribers normally give a client a time of a 1 hour transcription takes \pm 3 to 6 hours to transcribe. You also need to feature in proofing time as you need to check for sentence and paragraph construction as well as proofreading and spell checking.

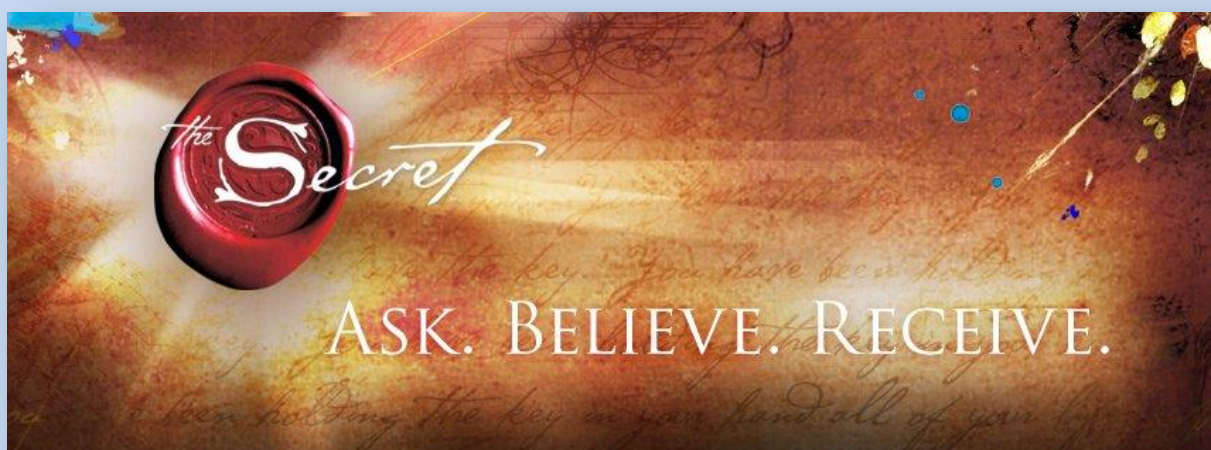
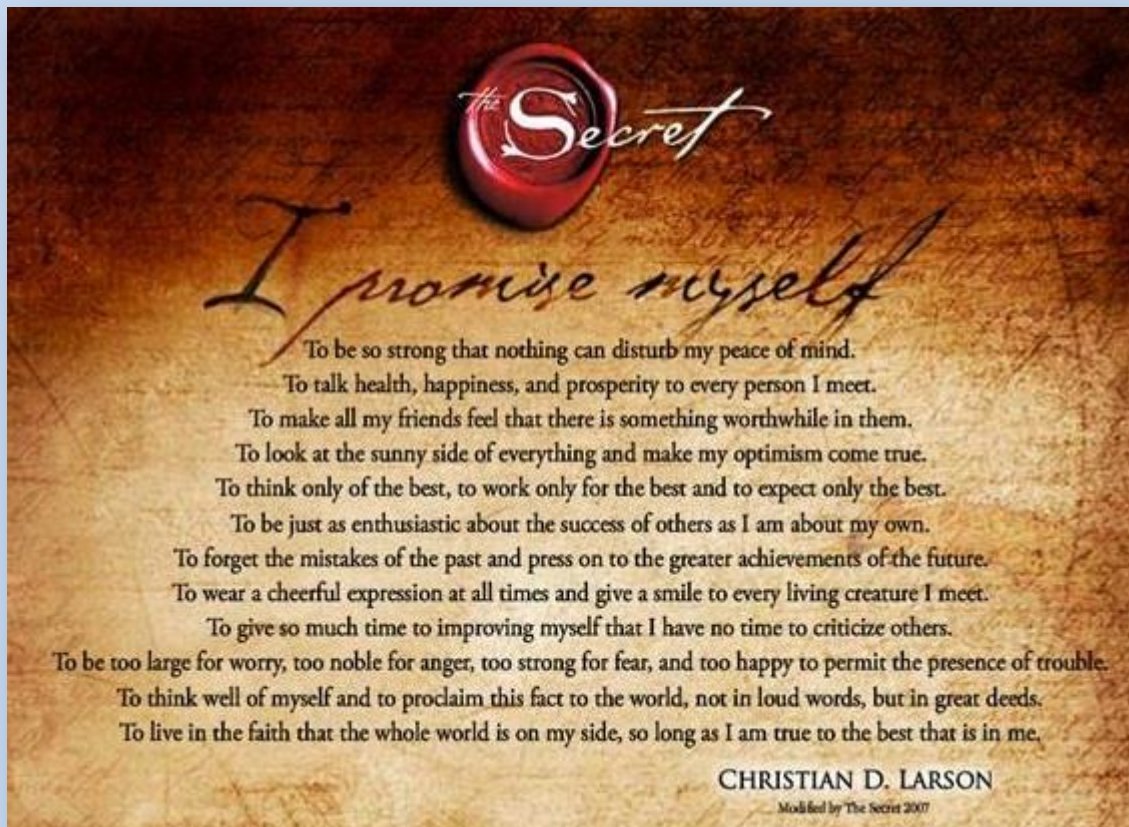
Data entry needs to be checked, it has to be checked for errors and checked that you have the information down correctly.



Checking work has to be part of your time you build into your quotes. Often this is left out and by doing this we do not get paid for this part of the service. Make sure it's featured as part of your standard terms and conditions.

Every document you complete you need to proofread and check, it's very unprofessional to send something back to the client without checking it and the client then finds errors. If you are using subcontractors to assist you, do not take it for granted that they will spell check and proof read their work, because often, they do not do this, it is your responsibility to make sure you do this before submitting the work back to the client.





P is for Poem

VA, VA, who are you?
Someone with work to do.
Working day or night to meet the targets in sight.
Typing or Transcribing, Proof reading and Checking.
Researching or not,
they have a lot to do.
Summer, Winter, Autumn or Spring
they have to do their thing.
Saturday, Sunday, Public Holiday or not,
the work goes on and doesn't stop
Find a VA to do your work you cannot do.
With a VA at your side,
you can sleep soundly at night.
Tea time, lunch time what do you mean,
there is nothing like that to be seen.
A little stop here or there,
is the only time we can spare

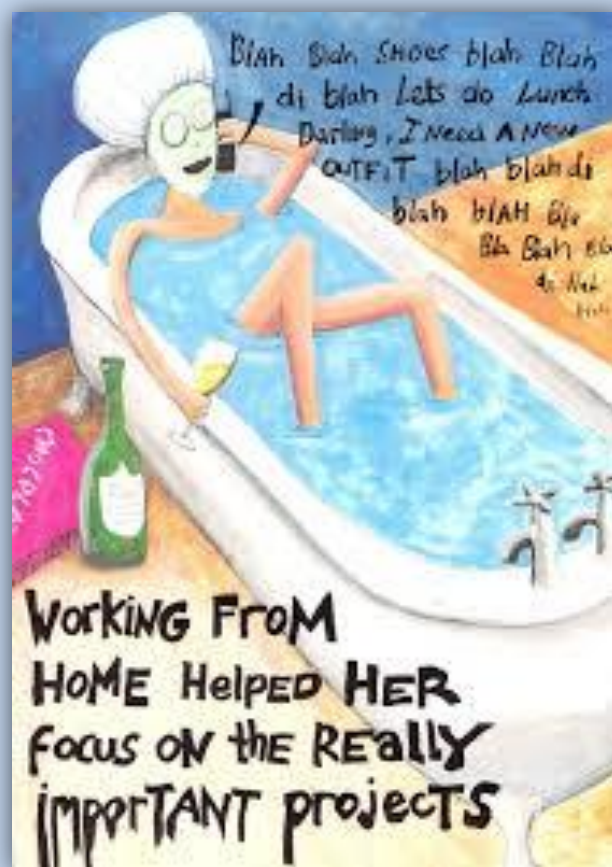


Q is for Quiet Times

Working from home is very different to working in a vibrant work place that is always busy, it is a lot quieter. You are working on your own. You must be able to motivate yourself daily to come to work on time, have a set start and finish time daily. Get up, get ready and go to work at home the way you would get up and go to work in the corporate world. Get yourself into a daily routine. You are actually going to work so this is no different to going to work in a workplace.

You are going to find it a lot quieter, the phone does not ring as often, you don't see people but there is nothing stopping you keeping in contact with people. Use Skype to keep in touch use your WhatsApp and BBM, email etc, use the communication that you have at your fingertips to stay in touch. Do not cut yourself off from people.

Put on the Radio, TV, or Music, have background noise it helps.



R is for Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara

Never put off today what you can do tomorrow



Never leave things till the next day if you have the time to do them today. Sometimes we get tasks or work to do that we do not want to do, my example for this would be I don't like typing contract agreements or leases, they always seem to take me ages to do. I seem as if I type slower, I don't know if I do, but it seems it and that makes the typing, take much longer than it should. The best way I deal with tasks like this is to get them done, put them ahead of other tasks and just plough on till I have finished. Often we get tasks/jobs we don't like doing, rather than put them off, jump in and get them done asap, which is the best way to get rid of them and then move on to the nicer work.

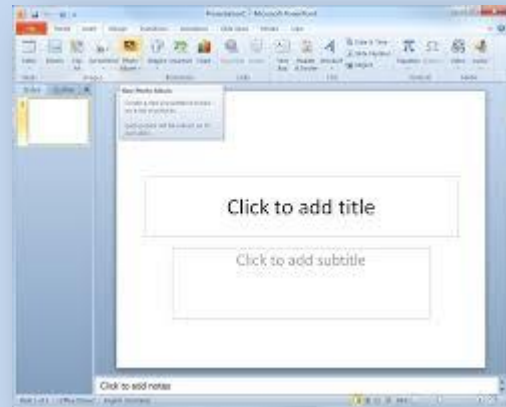


S is for Slideshow

I love working in PowerPoint, it is my favourite software to work in. I get a sense of satisfaction when a presentation is finished and it runs in slideshow mode and it runs perfectly. You can be so creative with your presentations.

Today there are great graphics around, animated graphics, fun graphics, and all types of graphics that you can use to make your slideshow look better. You can use background templates or design your own template. PowerPoint has great features that can make an amateur

presentation look professional. Today slides can be enhanced by adding YouTube clips and music; a boring presentation can be turned into a beautiful well-presented presentation in a very short time.



This is a great service to offer clients. Nearly every business person at some point will need to do a Business Presentation and what better skill to offer as Virtual Assistant. PowerPoint is very user friendly, easy to use and quick to learn so within hours you can have learned enough to be able to offer this as a service.

24 PowerPoint Tips:

1. **Learn PowerPoint keyboard shortcuts:**

Keyboard shortcuts, like Shift+F5 to start a slide show, can help you save time and look more slick when delivering your presentation.

2. **Use compelling graphics:**

Instead of blocks of text, make a point to create graphics like charts that can grab your viewers' attention.

3. **But don't overdo it on images:**

Although images are great for interest and engagement, too many images can be distracting. Use images when they add important information or support your point.

4. **Display information clearly:**

Think design, not decoration. Make sure that you're sharing complex information in a clear way.

5. **Create a textured background:**

By layering transparent images, you can create effects, including textured backgrounds.

6. **Think simple:**

When it comes to PowerPoint, more is not always better. Too much information, too many colours, and long lists can make it difficult for viewers to appreciate and understand your presentation.

7. **Explain terms and acronyms:**

Your audience may not understand all of the terms and acronyms you use in your presentation, so be sure to explain them the first time through.

8. **Make images familiar to your audience:**

Create images that your audience can identify with. Presenting to teachers?

Add classroom scenes to your presentation.

9. **Use a selection pane to control layers:**

Easily identify objects by keeping them in different layers and using your selection pane to control them.



10. **Take points one step at a time:**

Your audience will read your entire slide as soon as it's displayed. Have four points up there, as you're talking about the first one? They'll be three steps ahead. Stick to one point per slide for the most attention.

11. **Create cool text effects:**

It's easy to go overboard in this department, but using cool text effects can really help your presentation stand out.

12. **Create a custom tab for your favourite features:**

Set up a custom ribbon tab to keep your favourite shortcuts close at hand.

13. **Fix crooked lines:**

Correct crooked or less than perfectly straight lines in PowerPoint by fixing them in Format.

14. **Choose the best photo for your slide:**

Using the Colour Cop tool in PowerPoint, you can get exact colour matches for your slides.

15. **Disable Auto-Resize of fonts:**

With Auto-Resize, PowerPoint automatically shrinks the text as it's added to the slide, sometimes making fonts too small. Turn it off and get control of your font size.

16. **Make your pictures fit in slides:**

Use design tricks, like filling in colours from the slide, to make your photos fit in with your PowerPoint design.

17. **Brainstorm the old-fashioned way:**

Draw, sketch, or whiteboard your ideas not on PowerPoint but on good old fashioned pen and paper.

18. **Make your slide title stand out against a cluttered background:**

Adding text on top of images looks great but not on noisy backgrounds. Check out this tip to find out how to make sure it stands out.



19. **Jump to a slide by number:**

If you want to jump to a slide (instead of hitting the right arrow many times), just enter the slide number you want to access.

20. **Start a template for the entire presentation:**

Don't design each slide from scratch; create consistency (and save time) by starting out with a template slide that you can repeat for the whole presentation.

21. **Add audio and video:**

Bring in dynamic content that can better engage your audience, like audio and video.

22. **Pay attention to eye flow:**

Begin your slide with critical points or images at the top, and fade down into supporting information as they follow along.

23. **Customize clip art images:**

Remove backgrounds from images to see the graphics behind it and create custom clip art for presentations.

24. **Put your files on a USB:**

Even if you prefer to use hosting services, play it safe and keep a copy of your presentation on you just in case there's no Internet service available where you're headed.

T is for Typing Speed



In all my years of working as a Virtual Assistant I have never been asked what my typing speed is and I have never been asked to do a typing test by any client/s, and I have had a lot of clients. I receive a lot emails enquiring about typing from people who are looking for typing jobs and within the first few lines of the email they mention their typing speed.

With offering typing as a service to clients it is not about what speed you do, it's about your accuracy, presentation and that you know what you are doing, it's not about how fast you can type. Clients are simply not interested. It's not about your typing speed but about the fact that you can type and you can do the job with accuracy. Accuracy and layout are more important today than typing speeds.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Words_per_minute

Brandon Raziano found that one study of average computer users in 1998, the average rate for transcription was 33 words per minute and 19 words per minute for composition. In the

same study, when the group was divided into "fast," "moderate," and "slow" groups, the average speeds were 40 wpm, 35 wpm, and 23 wpm, respectively.

An average professional typist types usually in speeds of 50 to 80 wpm, while some positions can require 80 to 95 (usually the minimum required for dispatch positions and other time-sensitive typing jobs), and some advanced typists work at speeds above 120 wpm. Two-finger typists, sometimes also referred to as "hunt and peck" typists, commonly reach sustained speeds of about 37 wpm for memorized text and 27 wpm when copying text, but in bursts may be able to reach speeds of 60 to 70 wpm. From the 1920s through the 1970s, typing speed (along with shorthand speed) was an important secretarial qualification and typing contests were popular and often publicized by typewriter companies as promotional tools.

The fastest typing speed on an alphanumeric keyboard, 216 words in one minute, was achieved by Stella Pajunas in 1946 on an IBM electric. As of 2005, writer Barbara Blackburn was the fastest alphanumeric English language typist in the world, according to The Guinness Book of World Records. Using the Dvorak Simplified Keyboard, she maintained 150 wpm for 50 minutes, and 170 wpm for shorter periods. Her top speed was 212 wpm.

<http://superbeefy.com/history-of-typewriters/>

What's the fastest typing speed ever recorded? The top speed ever achieved by a typist, 216 words per minute stands as the record, set by one Stella Pajunas in 1946 on an IBM electric. To give you an idea of her accomplishment, sixty words per minute is considered good professional speed. The record for top speed for over an hour of nonstop typing is 149 words per minute, also set on an IBM machine.



Perhaps the most remarkable typing record is held by Albert Tangora, who during a 1923 business show in New York, ran off a total of 8,840 correctly spelled words in one hour of nonstop typing, a rate of 147 words per minute. Incredibly, Tangora achieved his record on a cumbersome old manual typewriter that would seem crude in comparison with modern models. Judges estimated that Tangora executed an average of twelve-and-a-half strokes per second!

The Dvorak Simplified Keyboard, or DSK, attempts to combat the tyranny of QWERTY through a logical arrangement of keys. The DSK places the most frequently used letters (70%) on the middle line or “home row” of the typewriter. On the top line letters used 22 % of the time; on the bottom row, letters used only 8% of the time.

The record for sustained speed on a Dvorak keyboard is 170 words per minute.

The longest nonstop typing stint was 162 hours, one minute, set by California high school teacher Robin Heil in 1976. A blind English office worker named Mike Howell holds the duration record for a manual machine: 1201/4 hours.

But the world’s greatest typing buff must certainly be Mrs. Marva Drew of Waterloo, Iowa. Over a six-year span, Marva exercised her skills by typing the numbers one to one million on a manual typewriter, a feat requiring 2,473 pages!

Typing Speed World Records

TEST	RESULT	TYPIST	MACHINE	YEAR
1 hr	147 wpm	Albert Tangora	Underwood Standard	1923
1 hr	149 wpm	Margaret Hamma	electric typewriter	1941
1 min	216 wrds	Stella Pajunas	IBM machine	1946
5 min	176 wpm	Carole Bechen	manual typewriter	1959
3 min	158 wpm	Gregory Arakelian	personal computer	1991
????	192 wpm	Natalie Lantos**	PC	1998

** Natalie set the World Record while a student at the CompuCollege School of Business (Vancouver, BC). Guinness Book of World Records, 1998 edition.
<http://www.owled.com/typing.html>

What Is a Good Typing Speed Per Minute?

by Dan Stone, Demand Media <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/good-typing-speed-per-minute-71789.html>

A good typist is faster than the 40 WPM average.

What qualifies as a good typing speed depends on the population you're examining: the general population or professionals. The average person types between 38 and 40 words per minute -- between 190 and 200 characters per minute. However, professional typists type a lot faster on average -- upwards of 65 to 75 WPM. A good typing speed compared to the general population would be over 40 WPM, but compared to professionals it would be in the 75 WPM range.

Characters Per Minute

The CPM metric is used to measure how many keystrokes a typist makes during a given time period. Characters per minute is often used as a metric because the name ignores the length of the words on the typing test. Someone who is typing lots of short, easy to spell words would perform faster than someone who types long, hard to spell words if you are counting words as a unit. A professional or good typist hits around 325 to 335 CPM. However, anyone that can type over 200 CPM is considered an above-average typist when compared to the general population.



Words Per Minute

The WPM typing metric is the most commonly used typing speed measurement. However, the WPM metric has a few adjustments to just counting words to compensate for the contrasting length of long words and short words: a "word" in the WPM standard is five

characters. The WPM standard is really just an adjusted CPM measurement that's easier for people to understand: people wouldn't count the length of a sentence by character length.

Average Performance

According to Teresia Ostrach, president of Five Star Staffing, half the population lacks the finger dexterity to type faster than 50 WPM. The median typist speed is 38 WPM and the mean typing speed is 40 WPM. RankMyTyping.com, a typing test website that aggregates typing speed scores based on online tests, ranks the average typing speed at 43 WPM. According to RankMyTyping.com, secretaries that have taken the test rank around 74 WPM and the average 13-year-old performs around 23 WPM.

High Proficiency

There are typists who extend far above and beyond the normal level of proficiency. According to "On the Reappraisal of Microeconomics" author Robert Ayers, a highly proficient typist can hit upwards of 120 WPM compared to the 20 to 30 WPM typing speed of a "key pecker." According to The Martin J. Whitman School of Management, Barbara Blackburn of Salem, Oregon holds the record as the fastest typist of all time. Blackburn could type at 150 WPM over a stretch of 50 minutes and peaked at bursts of 212 WPM.

Error Correction

Error correction plays a major role in typing speed. According to Ahmed Sabbir Arif and Wolfgang Stuerzlinger's study, "Analysis of Text Entry Performance Metrics," typists would perform around 85 WPM if they didn't count errors and continued to type, but would drop to 65 WPM when they had to correct errors.



About the Author

Dan Stone started writing professionally in 2006, specializing in education, technology and music. He is a web developer for a communications company and previously worked in television. Stone received a Bachelor of Arts in journalism and a Master of Arts in communication studies from Northern Illinois University.

T is for 'Who' used Typewriters

Psycho typewriter goes on sale for \$25,000

The typewriter used by Hitchcock screenwriter Joseph Stefano is up for auction



Joseph Stefano's typewriter and, inset, the Psycho screenwriter at his desk

Vintage Olympia typewriters can be bought on eBay for less than £25, but bidding on this one from the same era will start at \$25,000 (£16,000) because it was used to write one of cinema's greatest screenplays.

Joseph Stefano adapted Robert Bloch's novel into the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's classic horror film, *Psycho*, in 1960 on the olive green Olympia typewriter. It was only Stefano's second screenplay and the second *Psycho* adaptation - James P Cavanagh wrote the first, which Hitchcock swiftly rejected on the grounds that it read like a horror story written for television. Film legend has it that Hitchcock had to adapt his own schedule so that Stefano could keep seeing his psychoanalyst.

Stefano's major alteration was to have the film focus at first on the female character, Mary Crane - whose name was changed to Marion for the film. In the novel, the action begins with Norman Bates, and Crane is a passing stranger for whom, Stefano thought, readers feel little. By beginning with Crane - the part eventually played by Janet Leigh - Stefano changed the drift of the audience's affections, and changed film history in the process: it was the first time a leading lady had been murdered within the first 20 minutes of a movie.

The film went on to win four Oscars (Director; Supporting Actress; Cinematography, Black and White and Best Art Direction-Set Direction, Black and White) and Hitchcock asked Stefano to write the screenplays for *The Birds* and *Marnie* afterwards.

However, Stefano turned him down. He was busy writing episodes for the cult science fiction show *The Outer Limits*, 12 of which he also wrote on his green typewriter. Hitchcock hired the novelist Ed McBain to write *The Birds*, and hired Jay Presson Allen, a woman who had just adapted *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* for the stage, to write *Marnie*. Nevertheless,



Stefano always believed Hitchcock held a grudge against him.

Tracing the typewriters of famous authors had become something of a nerdy bibliophile's pastime, long before Tom Hanks invented his typewriter app. Expert Richard Polt records on his blog that, for instance, John Updike used an Olympia SM3, before trying out various models of Olivetti and settling on an Olympia 65C electric, which was auctioned at Christie's in 2010 and sold for \$4,375. Kingsley Amis used an Adler Standard, Daphne du Maurier an Underwood Portable, Dorothy Parker a Smith Corona. In 2011, the inaugural edition of the Australian magazine *Smtih Journal* featured a selection of typewriters from Robert Messenger's typewriter museum, and praised the machines of famous men - the Remington Orwell took with him to the sanatorium, the Hermes for which Jack Kerouac Cellotaped together sheets of paper so his flow wasn't interrupted, the many models used by the promiscuous Ernest Hemingway, one of whose tips for writing was "All you do is sit at a typewriter and bleed".

Once, the World's Most Valuable Typewriter - as noted by the Guinness Book of Records - was Ian Fleming's, auctioned for £56,250. But five years ago, Cormac McCarthy's Olivetti Lettera 32, bought in 1963 and used to type all his novels, sold at Christie's for \$254,500. Joseph Stefano's typewriter goes on sale online at Nate Saunders action house on 20 November. Bidding begins at \$25,000.



T is for Typing

T is for Typing and that is the basis of my job as a Virtual Assistant. My aim was to open up a business providing typing services and I have been able to do that.

I have always loved to type and I am quite happy to sit for hours on end, days on end typing. I don't care what I type, from contracts to reports to flow diagrams or business presentations, I am doing the job I love so whatever the typing is I don't mind doing it.

Everyone wants to do typing from home, but it is not that easy to get into the field and to get ongoing typing. I have made sure that my business name is out there far and wide, I have done the marketing and advertising required and I still do it and network often to show that my business is still running and current.



The key is finding the right clients that provide ongoing typing is to know your niche and target markets, know the types of clients you want to work for, actively look for clients that you can assist, never give up, always be positive. Positivity brings rewards. There is loads of potential clients in the work place, loads of types of clients that can provide you with typing it is just the case of you looking and finding the clients that are the right fit for what you want to do.



Not everyone is computer literate or likes to use computers, some people still like to do things the old fashioned way and write on notepads, not everyone has to like and use Computers, Tablets or Laptops. Not everyone has time and sometimes it quicker to just write up notes here and there as they can and these notes need to be typed up at some point. When looking for typing work look towards the people who would produce typing, maybe people who write often, maybe people in the training field who produce manuals, reports etc. Look towards Speakers as they need to write notes and produce PowerPoint Presentations. New businesses need documentation they need procedure manuals to run their businesses. There are many clients out and about that need typists it's just a case of looking and approaching them.



AMF Typing Services©® Est 2001

TAVASA Est 2008

<http://www.amftyping.co.za> <http://alison-fourie.blogspot.com>

T is for Typewriter



We have come a long way today since the humble typewriter, how the typewriter has changed over the years. The typewriter was first invented in 1868 by Christopher Latham Sholes it was manufactured in 1873 by a company called Remington Arms.

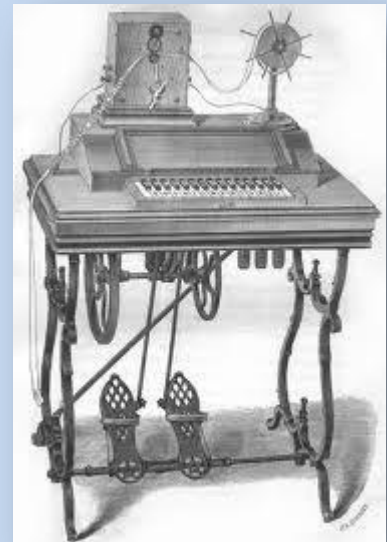
In the 1920's a unique typewriter was introduced, it was used during the 1920's to the 1930's.

In the 1940's the Telegraphic Typewriter was invented, this typewriter included a special keyboard and a paper roll attachment.

In the 1960's the typewriter changed again in appearance. Typewriters were now being used in offices and transformed how typing was done.

In the 1980's computers became a big thing. In 1981 the first personal computers were introduced.

I learnt to type on a manual typewriter, then we changed to an electronic typewriter at school, I came to South Africa and practiced my typing speed, typing on a portable typewriter. When I went to work for my first company in South Africa we used 'Compucorp' Word Processors. From here we also used 'Wang' Word Processors; the Compucorp Word Processors were far superior to Wang. In the early 1990's I used a personal computer with MultiMate as the word processing package and eventually moved to a Computer with Microsoft Office and since then that is what I have stayed with.



There has been an enormous change from the humble typewriter to the personal computer but that is technology for us and we have to move with the times and keep up with technology as it expands.



T is for Typing and Word Processing what is the difference

Typing

You have to look at what the typing is, is it just copy typing of text say a 1st to 3rd year student assignment, a book with text etc. Contracts, agreements, etc they are plain copy typing with tabulation for the bullet points. A document with many bullet points or staggered bullet points is just plain copy typing.

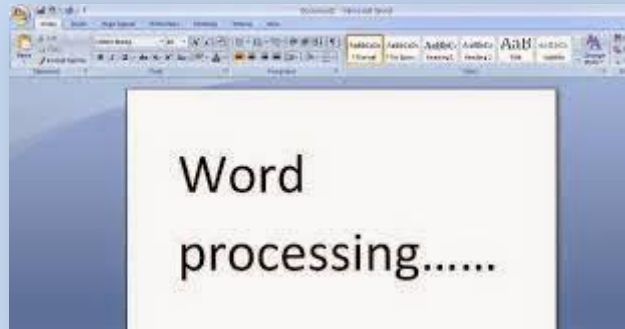


When you type for students doing MBA, Masters or Ph.D etc then there is much more involvement with the typing, references need to be a set in a specific way, the manuscript, dissertation etc, university guidelines must be adhered to like the Harvard Business Method or APA 6th Edition style. Some of these students are given bursaries which covers their typing, proofreading and editing costs.

But not all typing is plain copy typing; often you get documents with tables, charts, graphs, graphics. You have to look at what is the best way to do these, how long does it take to do a page, what is involved.

Word Processing

Word Processing covers many tasks - from graphics to graphs, tables, flow diagrams, most things that you must create that are not plain copy typing, this is word processing and it can be very work intensive and time consuming.



Can you create the chart in Excel and then copy it across into Word, can you do the graphic in word or must you go and create it in Photoshop etc and then copy it into word etc.

Sometimes with manuals you may need to use the services of a Graphic Designer and these often quote per graphic involved, depending on what must be done to that graphic. So beware and don't under quote if graphic design is involved, as you will need to cost in their charge too. You will need to ensure you explain this to the client. Sometimes you might have to scan a graphic and copy it into the document. Just check what is involved before doing the work.

A complicated table, chart or graph might take some time to create. When you start looking at the item you must create, then you need to look at the length of time it takes, is it viable to charge say R20.00 per page, if the job is going to take you long, no, it's not viable.

Flow diagrams can take an inexperienced person a few hours to create, but someone experienced in doing flow diagrams then it can be done very quickly, even big complicated flow diagrams, so again you need to look at how long it takes you to do the job, what is involved.

Maths typing, typing of equations, signs and symbols is time taking but you need to look at the manual as a whole and work out how long you think it will take you, what is involved, you might do the work using maths software or you may use MS Word Equations etc.

With most typing work look at what is involved, there is a difference in time with experienced typists and new typists.

These days with the economy being what it is you need to look at the client, what, do you feel in your gut that a client can afford to pay. Don't push the boundaries too low to get the work where it is not cost effective to do the job, also don't push the boundaries and charge the client too high a price, you simply want get the job.

Bulk Typing

Manuals are bulk work so you could very easily go down to R15 to R20 per page or a price per manual, taken on how long it will take you to do. When you do manuals, check out what is involved; often you can give a lower price because it's bulk work for you.

Formatting Documents

The best way to go for formatting is using your hourly rate. You never know how long it is going to take to format a document till you start working on it. A document that has been set up by someone other than yourself can often give all sorts of problems; let the client know this as its often not straight formatting. Often when you start everything will jump out of alignment, tabs etc so it can take twice as long to format than it would to retype.



Columns, tables, graphics tend to come out of alignment. Table of Content can become completely messed up and that can take a while to unravel and put right so make sure you give yourself plenty of time to work on formatting documents. Keep track of your time and charge hourly. If you charge per page you will find some pages can take much longer to format than others and you really have to look at the time that is spent formatting to price this properly. You can charge per page but might be better to go via your hourly rate.

Quotations

With all work, never quote blindly, how can you quote when you have no idea what the job/task is, you have no idea how long it will take you or what is involved. Ask the client to send you a sample. How can an architect quote on a job he has not seen! You need to look at the task at hand then decide what is involved, how long it will take you and get a full

description of client requirements before quoting. No matter how urgent a job is, surely the payment is the most important thing in the end, the job is important to the client but they should understand that you do not quote blindly, ask for an example first, check it out, see if you can do the job in the time frame given, you can also negotiate as you know, how you work and how long jobs take. My advice would be do not take on an urgent task without seeing what is involved first as its quite easy to undercharge. Make sure you clarify the clients' requirements and write them down/record them or get the client to email you further, as clients often forget or change their mind and lay the blame on you. Email them a copy of their requirements and get them to reply before you go ahead that everything is ok.

PDF

Do not PDF a document unless your client's specifically asks you too. Do not think that by saving to PDF that you are forcing the client to return to you, that is not the case, they can simply get it done elsewhere, simply convert it online and edit it themselves. Most clients want the work typed up and then they want to be able to edit it themselves.



T is for Tavasa

Tavasa • The Transcriptionists and Virtual Assistants of South Africa

Tavasa • The Transcriptionists and Virtual Assistants of South Africa,
<http://www.tavasa.co.za> and <http://tavasa.blogspot.com/> founded 2008 and
run by Alison Fourie and Gayner Paynter.



Join our **yahoo group, online email forum 'Tavasa' free membership.**
To join go to: <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/tavasa/>

What is Tavasa:

We are an email support forum

We offer support, advice, assistance, job leads, subcontractor positions etc

We support VAs and Transcriptionists

Ebooks for sale

Documents, agreements, retainer agreements, rates calculator etc, various document that
will assist VAs and Transcriptionists

We are freelance VAs and Transcriptionists who run our own businesses offering our
services to clients, on an as and when basis, retainer basis or regular basis etc

What Tavasa is not:

We are not a **Recruitment** company

We do not offer **business opportunities**

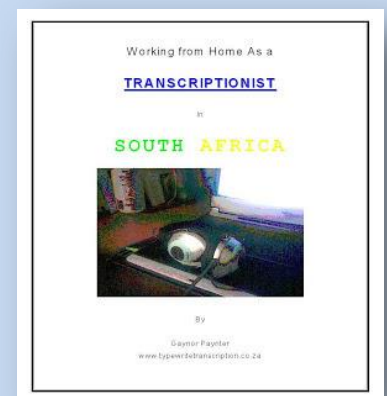
We do not **employ VAs or Transcriptionists**

We are not a **training company** for VAs or Transcriptionists

Gaynor and myself have years of experience behind us, Gaynor in Transcription and VA and
myself in VA. We offer assistance in the way of advice to new VAs and Transcriptionists. We
have both written EBooks, see below.

Ebook: Working From Home as a Transcriptionist in South Africa
by Gaynor Paynter

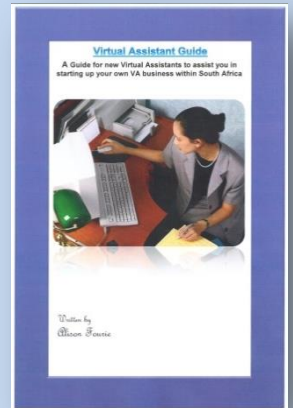
This E-book is packed with everything you need to know about
working from home as a transcriptionist. I started out as a
transcriptionist in 2005 and I've included everything I've learned
along the way that I wish someone had told me. How do you get
that first client? How do you market? Invoicing and Customer
care.



Ebook: VA Guide/Handbook

I have a Guide/EBook for sale R130.00, which explains all about starting up a VA business within SA. The Handbook content includes marketing, networking, prices/rates, business plan details/info. Just send an email to amftyping@mweb.co.za, requesting the handbook and I will then forward you an invoice, on receipt of your payment, I will forward your Guide to you via email, it is a PDF document. This Handbook is updated on a continual basis. Here is a look at some of the content within the handbook:

- Welcome to the world of Virtual Assistants
- Steps to starting up your own Virtual Assistant Business:
- Business Plan
- Business Name and Logo
- Company Website
- Registering your Business
- Client Relationships and Pricing
- Transcription/Dictaphone Typing/Transcribing
- Free Practice Files for General Transcription
- Advertising/Marketing/Networking
- Advertise your services via Google Alerts:
- Procedure to deal with Clients: (This is how I do it, an example)



Please contact us further should you require more information.

Emails: Gaynor: gpaynter@telkomsa.net - Alison amftyping@mweb.co.za

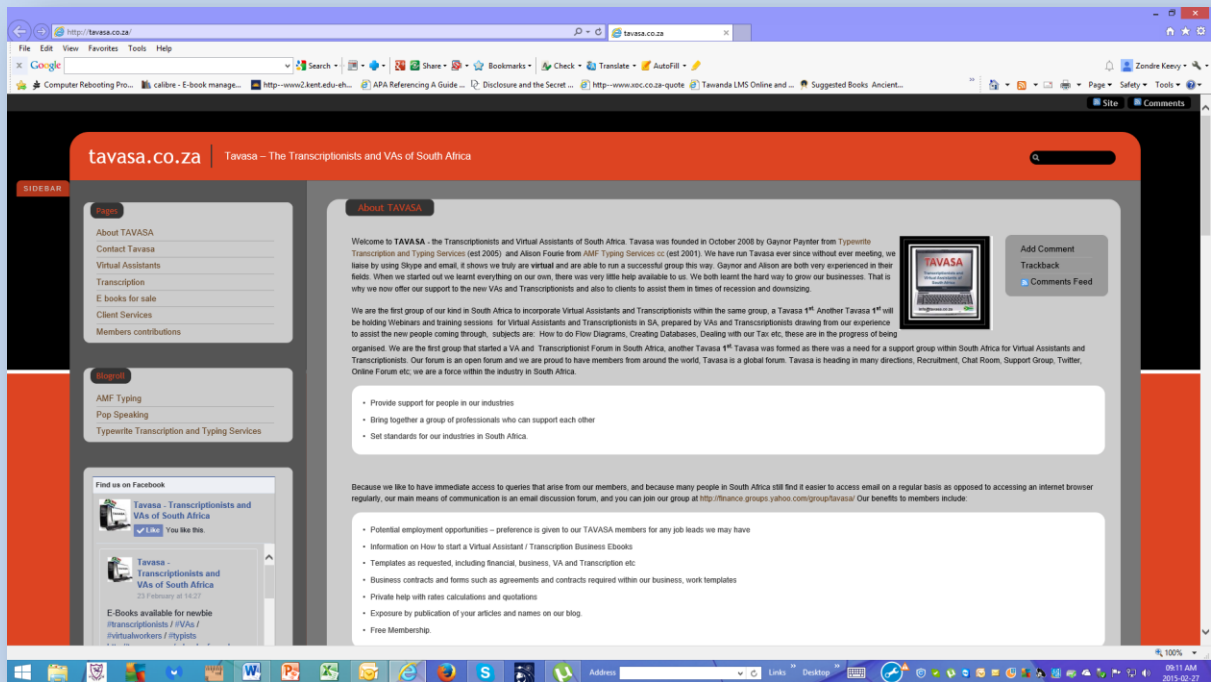
Tavasa ★ The Transcriptionists and Virtual Assistants of South Africa

Join our yahoo group, online email forum 'Tavasa' **free membership**.

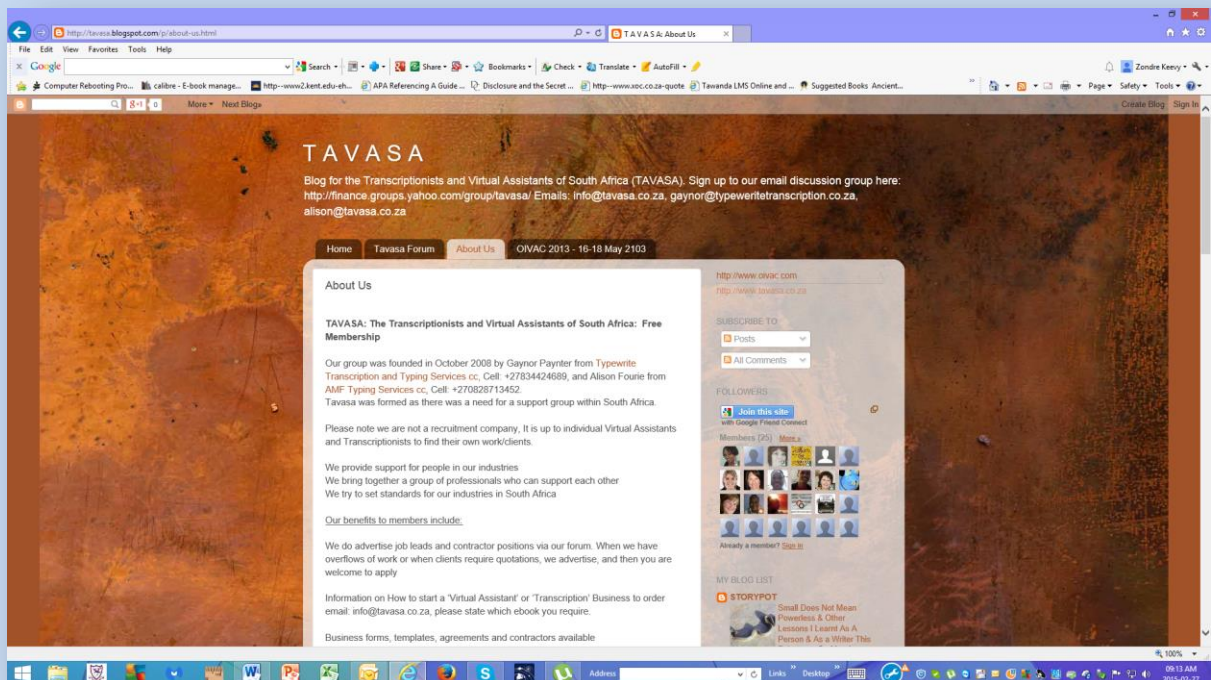
To join go to: <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/tavasa/>



Website: <http://www.tavasa.co.za>



Tavasa Blog ★ <http://tavasa.blogspot.com/>

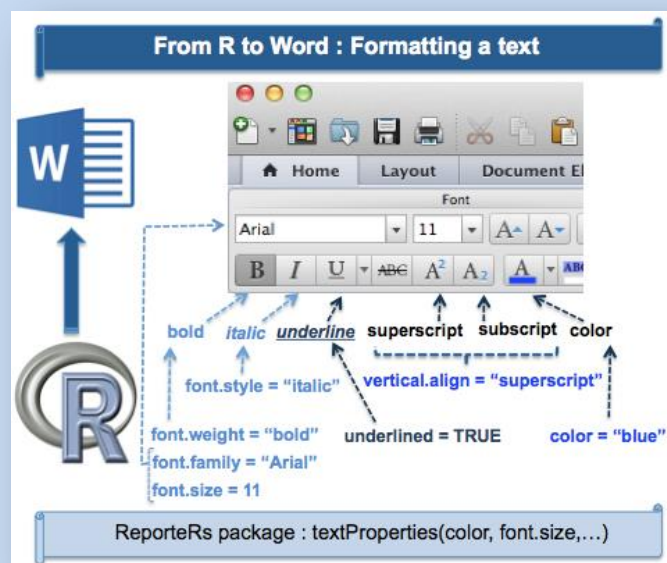


U is for Under Pressure

A client asks you to format a large document. Often clients ask you to format as they are battling to format it themselves.

The minute you start trying to move anything within the document, it throws out the auto-numbering and with it the formatting.

So you struggle on. Clear the formatting, start again to automatic number, again it does not work, you fiddle and fiddle after all, you cleared the formatting, it should work. No, so you then make a copy without formatting, copy/paste it into a new document and start again. Again same problem! Client has told you only they have worked on it. You then check the properties to find it is an old document which has been through many formatting attempts. No-the-wonder it has a problem and you can't work on the document.

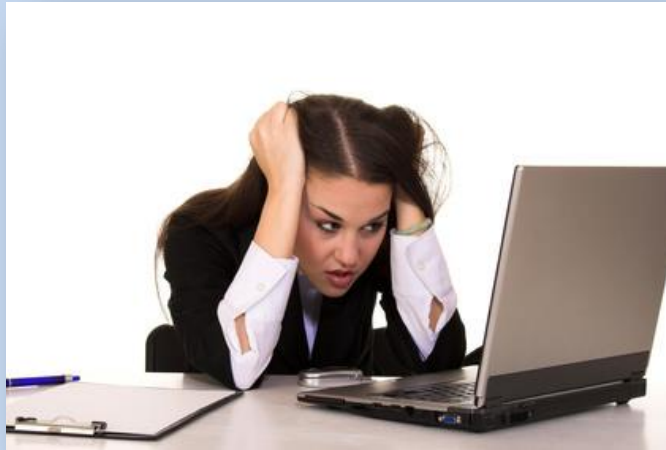


You have a deadline you know you can't reach as you are sitting with a mess.

You contact your client with the suggestion to retype from scratch. Client is happy you can do something, when they have been struggling.

After a retype, properly formatted, missed deadline, but, you have a happy client as you have been able to produce a document that they can now use and edit.

Sometimes it's not all about the deadline, it's about getting the work right and making the client happy.



You can communicate with client's, you can make suggestions and come up with workable solutions. Clients can be approachable, deadlines can be changed in some circumstances. Communicating with the client goes a long way, it earns you trust and respect from the client, as they then know, you know, what you are doing.

It is not all about the deadline... It is about providing your clients with a Quality Client Service.

Remember



U is for Urgent

How many tasks do we do that are urgent, whether they are or not the clients always say it's urgent, can you do it now. As VAs we tend to stop what we are doing and attend to the urgent task or fit it in between tasks.

We get very little work that is does not have a deadline which is usually yesterday. As VAs we tend to also work long hours to get these urgent tasks done. It is important to our clients and it's important to us to provide our clients with a quality fast service.



There is very little transcription work that is done that is not urgent, it always seems as if the client leaves it till the last minute to find someone to transcribe their files and they want it yesterday and another thing the clients with transcription work often do not want to pay much to have the files transcribed. They are not aware of how long it takes and what is involved with transcribing files, so it is up to VAs/Transcriptionists to often educate the client on what is involved as often they do not understand why we charge the fees we do for transcription. Sometimes you can negotiate with the client if you cannot do the work straight away, explain how long you will be with your present task and see if they can negotiate just a little bit so that you are able to do the work for the client. It's better to try to negotiate then just turning the job down because you cannot do it now.

Another thing that is problem with urgent work is, if we cannot do it then sometimes using a subcontractor is the way to go, trouble is subcontractors often do not understand that you are their client and that the deadline is important and has to be adhered to. Because the subcontractor does not work with the actual client and they don't think of you as their client they are often not that bothered about the deadline. Sometimes this process can take longer than the time it would take you to actually do the job yourself.

V is for Virtual Assistant

When I saw the name 'Virtual Assistant' (VA), I knew then and there that this job was for me. I knew this is what I wanted to do. Being a VA is a job like any other career job. If you have had a background in Corporate Office then this is good grounding to move forward and take up the challenge of starting your own Virtual Assistant business. Being a VA gives me the opportunity to work from home. I have my own office all set up with my equipment all around me, close to hand.



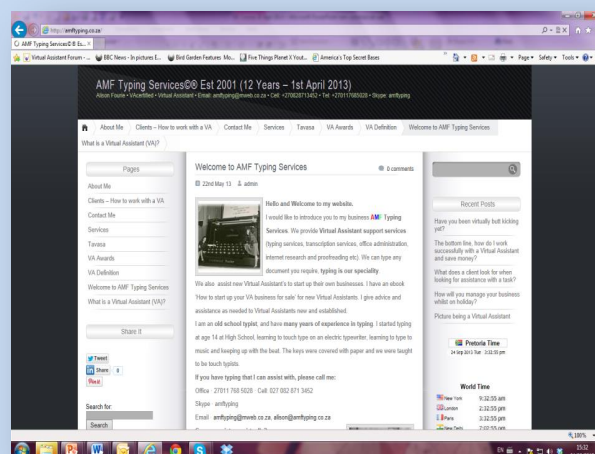
I have years of office experience starting in the UK as an Office Junior to working as Senior Secretary, HR Co-ordinator at a large company. I felt I had enough experience behind me to try this and to see where I could go with it.

I did some research and found VAs like Kathie M Thomas, Lyn Prowse-Bishop and Tawnya Sutherland and I knew I could do something similar.

In the time I started out the Internet was relatively new and advertising was for free, I did online advertising and marketing non-stop for months on end, advertising in as many places as I could find and I didn't just advertise in South Africa, I advertised where I could around the world, I took advantage of the fact that there was loads of free advertising available everywhere.

My first website was my main focus of advertising and that immediately drew clients to it, since then my site has been redesigned many times over to what it is today

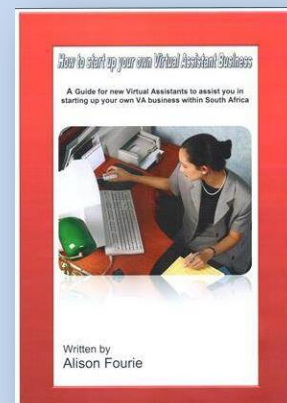
<http://www.amftyping.co.za>.



I run a blog <http://alison-fourie.blogspot.com> its packed full of information. I have also wrote an ebook book “How to start up your own Virtual Assistant business”. Both of these are to assist new VAs start up their own businesses.



I am in the process of writing a course for new VAs and also have a Ebook that I am working on about Rates as that is the thing that most VAs struggle with. So it is all about helping the new VAs.



Ive had many clients from around the world as well as in South Africa. I know the types of clients I like to work for and the type of work I love to do. My business has been up and running now for 14 years and I love running my business. I am working in my dream job.

Being a Virtual Assistant is about **running your own business, owning your own business**, you are **not working for someone else**, and you are **not an employee**. **You are a business owner, your own boss**. You do not work for clients, you work with **clients**, you do not work for other VAs, you subcontract to other VAs or you can work as an associate in a multi VA practice. I find a lot of people who want to become Virtual Assistants actually have no idea what a Virtual Assistant is and what we do. We are service companies; we offer our skills and experiences to clients. We work as any business does but we have to do our own Bookkeeping, administration, marketing, advertising, networking, fixing our own office equipment etc.



V is for Vision Board

A Virtual Assistant Vision Board

Vision boards are simply a visual representation of all of your hopes and dreams. You can make a vision board by simply cutting out photos or pictures of things you would like to attract into your life. A vision board is basically a collage that acts as a reminder of the kind of life you would like to be living.



Vision boards are a simple concept that can work to help you make your dreams a reality. Vision boards are a sort of treasure map or goal setting device that can help you supercharge your powers of manifestation.

They were made popular during the famous movie called **The Secret**, but the truth of it is that vision boards have been around for years. The concept of a vision board is based on your emotions and the idea that when you see images of the kind of life you would like to lead, that this helps you manifest those images into your life.

The vision board is of course based on the law of attraction and the concept that you draw into your life those things you focus upon. By creating a vision board, you are in essence creating the life you want to be leading and by focusing on that vision board, you can draw those things into your life.

Your brain is basically a receiver of images and by creating a vision board you give your brain something to focus on. Your subconscious mind works much better with pictures and images, so creating a vision board is a great way to help you pave your way to success.

The goal of the vision board is to evoke an emotional response, so that you feel the feelings that you would feel as if you had already achieved your goal. The feeling or emotional response may just be the key to unlimited success because the more you evoke the feelings and emotions, the faster you will get to your intended goal. The mere sight of your vision board should evoke a passionate response from you and you should stage your vision board somewhere where you will see it often. By reflecting on it and focusing on it throughout the

day you will be bathing your subconscious mind in the feelings and emotions that you would feel as if you had already achieved your goal. Having said that, you don't want to set your vision board up somewhere where people can make fun of you, so if you are self-conscious about this work, then simply put your vision board somewhere private.

To create your vision board, you will need some poster board or foam board. You can cut pictures out of magazines or print them off of the computer or Internet as well. Real Estate magazines and car brochures work well too.

Simply arrange your pictures like a collage and tape them or glue them to the board. It's important to make sure that the pictures you use evoke an emotional response because that is the key to making vision boards work for you.

You should get excited when you look at your board, because this is the life you are going to be stepping into. The more you believe you will achieve your hopes and dreams the faster you will get there.



When creating your vision board, ask yourself what kind of pictures best represent the life you want to be living. You can also think about what kind of car you want to be driving or what kind of house you want to be living in.

Perhaps your dream is to travel, if so use pictures of places that you would like to travel to. It's important to always keep your vision board fresh as well, because you may change what it is you want over time. You could even use a whiteboard and magnets if you want to create a board that is dynamic and changeable.

Vision boards can be an important tool in your kit of parts and they just might be the key to your ultimate success. The point of a vision board is to create a visual snapshot of the kind of life you would like to be living so you can reflect upon that image as much as possible.

The most important part of a vision board is that feeling of passion you get when you look at

it. You should feel an emotional tug at your heart when you look at your pictures. You should see yourself in that room, sitting on the sofa having a cup of tea or coffee.

You should be able to picture yourself living that life, in every way. You should believe in the heart of your heart that you will arrive at your destination no matter what.

When you commit 100% to your goal there is no telling how quickly you might arrive at your destination. The vision board is your personal treasure map, so make it a good one because dreams really do come true.



The Secret - Rhonda Byrne <http://thesecretrhondabyrne.com>

W is for WhatsApp

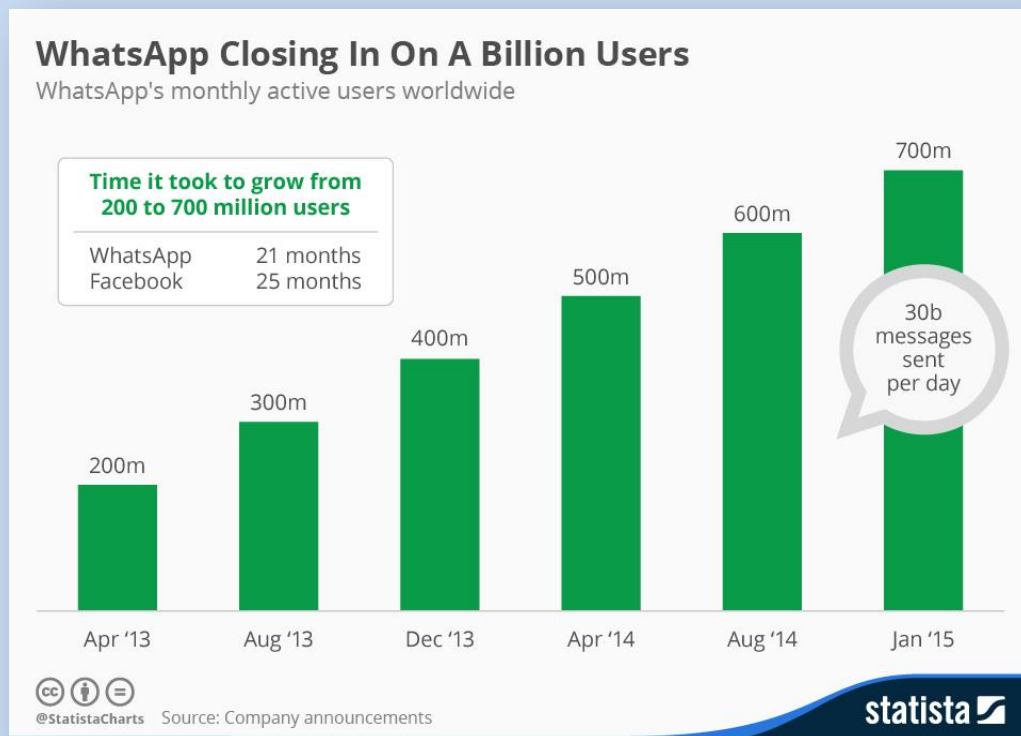
Communication with Clients and Sub-Contractors is so important and today it is made easier by social media technology.



Most people have Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, Whatsapp etc. So there should be no reason not to keep in contact with people who we work with or for.

Most people today have a Cell Phone that can be used to keep in contact. If you can stay in contact with family and friends then you can stay in contact with the people you work with. It takes but a few minute to send a Whatsapp.

Here are some Whatsapp Stats for interest:



Source: <http://www.wapp4phone.com/facts/popular-whatsapp-world/>

Percentage of WhatsApp users by country:

- South Africa – 78%
- Malaysia – 75%
- Argentina – 74%
- Singapore – 72%
- Hong Kong – 71%
- Spain – 70%
- India – 69%
- Mexico – 67%
- Italy – 62%
- The Netherlands – 61%
- Germany – 57%
- Brazil – 56%
- Saudi Arabia – 56%
- Indonesia – 52%
- Turkey – 49%

Source: <http://www.wapp4phone.com/facts/popular-whatsapp-world/>

With Whatsapp we can quickly send messages to our clients and vice versa, if we have problems we can let our clients know just straight away.

With the use of camera's now in Cell Phones I find is a great help. My clients can quickly send through pieces of text they want to add to their documents or photographs, graphics etc that they need me to add to their content.

Another great tool with WhatsApp is group. I am the Chairlady of our Complex where we live and we use our WhatsApp group to let everyone know what is happening, nobody can complain they do not know what is going on, as things happen within the complex we immediately put information onto our group to keep everyone posted.

WhatsApp is one of the greatest forms of communication today in our social media world. There should be no excuse today for not keeping in contact with people. We have communication technology at our fingertips.

W is for Working Hours as a VA

Wouldn't it be nice not have to work. But as some of us have to work what better job than being a Virtual Assistant, we get to work from home. We get to work the hours we want to, we can wear what we like for work if we are not seeing clients, we can even do our work in PJs. We can schedule our day to suite us and our own way of working. We can listen to music while we work.

The reason lots of people want to become a Virtual Assistant (VA) is because they think it will give you more time to spend at home with your new-born, small children and families. In reality if you have a full business of clients then your spare time is spent doing the admin work that is required to keep your business going. You don't just to the actual work but you do the business administration as well. You have to continually market your company, your books need to be kept up to date, you need to advertise to show other businesses that you are out there and also need to get potential clients attention.



You have to work and meet deadlines. Most of the work we get in is deadline related and that can mean long hours, working weekends and public holidays. A deadline must be met, simple as that. Our work does not stop like corporate hours and this is not the sort of business you can run on corporate hours, it simply want work. You have to be here as your clients demands to a certain extent.



We work hard as VAs as we have to meet deadlines but at least with working long hours we are working from our own virtual offices and do not have to travel backward and forward to and from work at all hours.

I love the fact that I don't have to travel far to work every day, it takes me a minute to get to my desk and the best part is I don't have to clear my desk every night because the cleaning ladies will be coming into the office at night. I can simply leave my desk exactly as I left it and pick up again in the morning.

I am glad in the winter when it's cold that I don't have to travel on a very cold bus for an hour or more to get to work and even in the summer when it is too hot on the bus as its hot outside, and there was nothing worse than coming home and getting off the bus in a thunder storm and have to run home to get out of the rain. Now I can sit and work even though there is heck of a thunder storm outside. I can sit in my office working and look out of the window at the storm and know I am warm and dry inside.

If you work in a corporate office you have to invest in working clothes. As we work from home offices we can choose our dress clothes and only really have to wear and dress nicely if we are seeing clients. We can dress casual and be comfortable working in any weather when working from home.

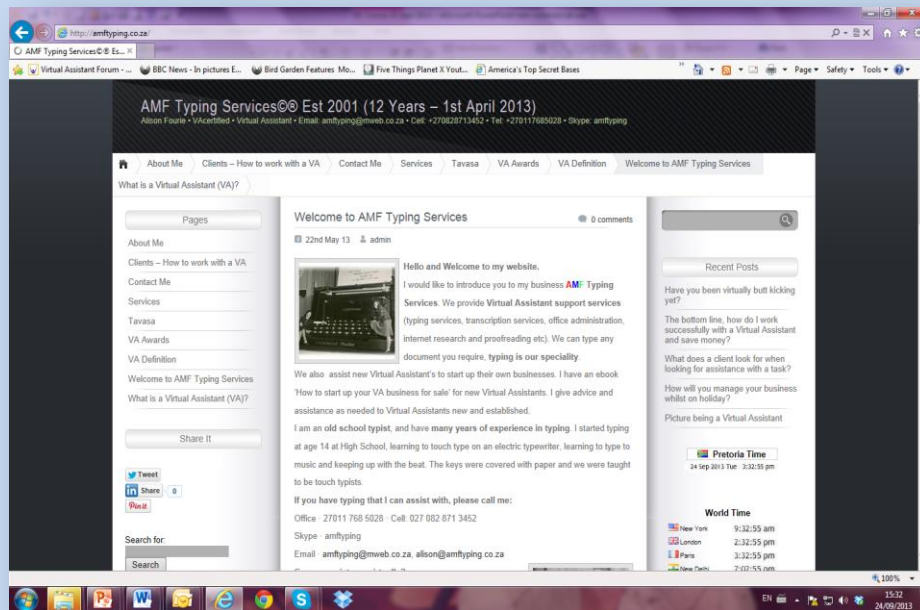
I don't think there is any job which matches working for yourself, working from home; it must be one of the best jobs to have.



W is for Website

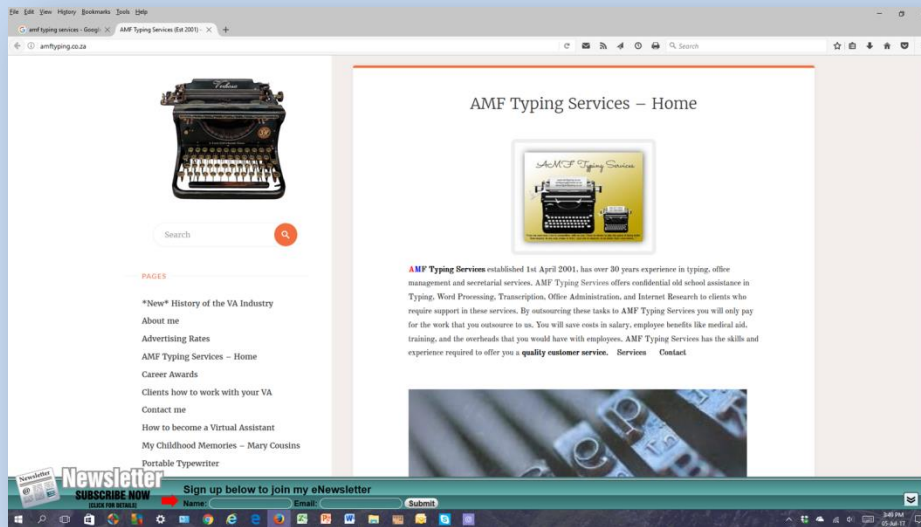
As a VA it is very important to have a website, your website is your company's online advertisement. Below is a screen shot of my home page of website AMF Typing Services.

<http://www.amftyping.co.za>



Your website needs to be original. What is right for one VA is not right for another. Your website needs to reflect your company and the services you offer. You can do research on other VA websites to get some ideas and to see the look and feel of other sites but please do not use others content, this is plagiarism. Your content needs to be original and totally about you and your company. Your site needs to stand out from your competition and it has to draw clients to contact you further. You do not need pages and pages of website a few pages of good content that draws the eye is adequate enough. Keep it updated often. The more a site is updated the higher it climbs on search engines. Encourage visitors to return to your site by keeping it fresh. Offer free items, sell EBooks, ask questions to get audience participation on your site.

AMF Typing Services 2017 Website



X, Y and Z is for The End

I hope you have enjoyed reading all the articles, all comments are welcome, be them positive or negative, I would love to hear from you amftyping@mweb.co.za or alison@amftyping.co.za

If you have an article that you would like me to include in this EBook please contact me further. I would be happy to add your article/s.



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Linked In: <http://za.linkedin.com/in/amftyping>

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