

**HIRING AND  
WORKING WITH A**



**VIRTUAL  
ASSISTANT**

**NOTICE: You DO NOT Have the Right to Reprint or Resell this Report!**

**You Also MAY NOT Give Away, Sell, or Share the Content Herein**

Copyright © Delegated To Done LLC

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.** No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form whatsoever, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational storage or retrieval system without express written, dated and signed permission from the author.

**DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES:** The information presented in this report represents the views of the publisher as of the date of publication. The publisher reserves the rights to alter and update their opinions based on new conditions. This report is for informational purposes only. The author and the publisher do not accept any responsibilities for any liabilities resulting from the use of this information. While every attempt has been made to verify the information provided here, the author and the publisher cannot assume any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies or omissions. Any similarities with people or facts are unintentional.

**AFFILIATE DISCLAIMER:** Delegated To Done LLC may receive compensation from some of the entities listed in this report for referrals, as their “thank you” for sending you their way. However, Delegated To Done LLC never recommends any service or product solely for the reason of receiving commissions (and neither should you) – Delegated To Done LLC knows our reputation is on the line.

## Table of Contents

Step One: Understanding What a VA is – and isn't! .....	4
Step Two: Defining Why You Need a VA – and What Type to Hire .....	6
Step Three: Finding the Perfect VA – for You .....	7
Step Four: Setting Up Perfect Communication .....	11
Step Five: Avoiding VA/client Mistakes that Brand you as a Total Newbie .....	12
Step Six: How to Be the Perfect Client .....	14
Conclusion .....	16

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT



Congratulations for deciding to take that all-important first step to outsourcing. And what better place to start than hiring and working with a Virtual Assistant?

But outsourcing part of your business to a VA is like any other business function: There's a wrong way, a right way and a better way to do it. Doing it the better way ensures not only that you will be thrilled with the results, with stress taken off your shoulder, but that your VA will find it equally rewarding – financially and emotionally.

If you use a VA in an ongoing relationship, you will both become a team that is greater than the sum of its two halves – a veritable business powerhouse!

### Step One: Understanding What a VA is – and isn't!

Your VA is an independent service provider with highly specialized skills or areas of expertise. You do not “employ” her, you hire her as a freelancer, so one big advantage is that you don't have to worry about observing federal laws that regular employers need to observe. You don't need to pay her for statutory holidays, pay benefits or vacation time; or deduct payroll expenses. She does all that herself.

The best VAs **specialize**. They become strong in a specific area – even if that area is “general office administration”.

You may end up with more than one VA on your team—in fact, you should **plan** to expand your VA and/or outsource contractor contingent over the next five years.

You can hire VAs who specialize in:

- Shopping cart set up and maintenance
- Autoresponder set up and maintenance
- Content marketing and management
- Web design and maintenance
- WordPress set up and maintenance
- Podcasting creation and set up
- Video creation and distribution
- Webinar creation and set up
- Administrative support
- Bookkeeping

In fact, you can find a VA for just about every type of support you can think of – though the most common types of support offered and called for are administrative support and

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

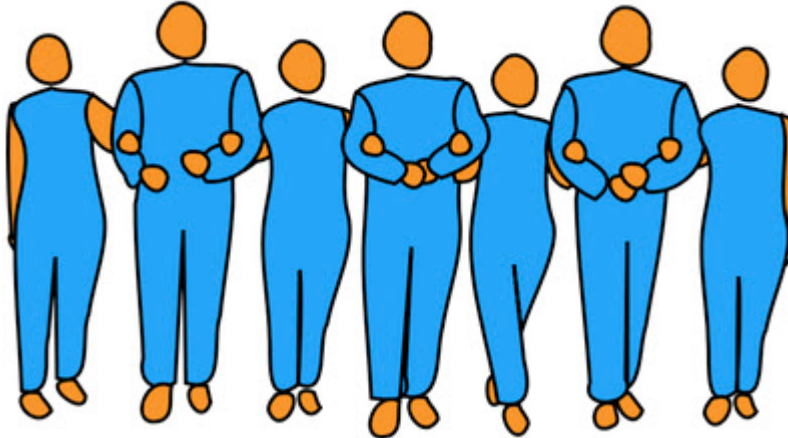
marketing support.

VAs also often specialize in serving a particularly field or industry, with specialized skill sets applicable only to that area. For example:

- Real Estate
- Medical
- Coaching
- Marketing
- Public speaking
- Event organization
- Audio visual production

Take it for granted that she will have other clients. As an independent contractor without the security of an employment contract, she will need to make sure she doesn't keep all her eggs in one basket (yours).

In fact, she may use a team of virtual assistants herself. You can ask whether or not she will be handling your projects personally, but you can also trust that if she assigns it to a team member, that team member will be a hand-picked specialist able to do as good a job as your chosen VA—or better—for your particular project.



### ***Booking and Paying Your VA***

VAs work either by package rate, hourly, monthly or by project. It is important to specify which type of arrangement you wish to make or to check and find out how your chosen VA prefers to handle billing – but your VA will be highly organized. She'll let you know all this either on her website or at the appropriate moment during contact.

Since VAs do have other clients, you may wish to reserve a block of your chosen VAs time on a regularly monthly basis. That way, you won't run the risk of finding out she is completely booked, the next time you want her to work for you.

Expect to pay on completion of a project, unless otherwise pre-arranged. Some VAs will invoice you monthly – but others will demand either the full monthly amount or a retainer up front. It is their prerogative to do so, but unless a VA has a sterling reputation and is in hot demand, try to start out by hiring her for a small project first, to see how you both work together and how reliable she is.

She will specify how she prefers to take payment. Common payment methods include credit card, PayPal, or eCheck. (Invoicing is relatively rare unless you both work locally in the same geographic area.)

## Step Two: Defining Why You Need a VA – and What Type to Hire

Don't just hire a VA because everyone is telling you it will "save you time". Know specifically:

- What you want her to do
- Your immediate goal in hiring her
- Whether or not hiring her will be cost effective (i.e. you'll make more money by delegating a specific task to her than by trying to do it yourself)
- Your long term goal in hiring her: How she fits in with your marketing plan

This means you need to sit down, go over your business plan and analyze where you are losing money.

You lose money every time you have to perform a task that doesn't directly bring in income.

For example, you are a graphic designer. You are not directly making money when you write articles and upload them to directories or to your blog.

You are also not directly making money when you spend an afternoon tearing your hair out, trying to figure out why your social feed plugin doesn't work properly in WordPress.

You make money directly when you design graphics. Period.

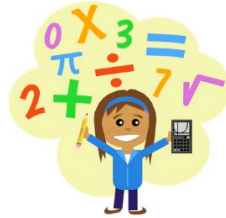
### **The Formula**

- Calculate how much money you make in graphic design per hour
- Find out how much per hour you would have to pay a VA who specializes in content writing and WordPress to handle your blog and article-creation

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

- Calculate how many design hours you have lost dealing with such tasks and problems
- Compare your results and figure out whether or not you would make more money relegating your blog and article handling to your specialist VA for the same amount of hours previously lost

If your return on investment (ROI) would be greater if you were to hand the hated, non-money-making tasks over to a VA, check your budget and do it!

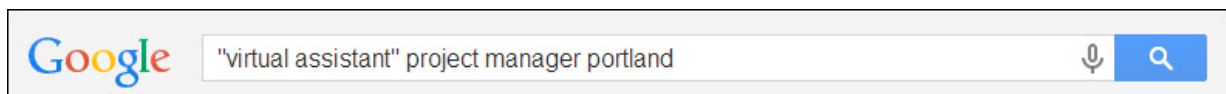


### Step Three: Finding the Perfect VA – for You

There are multitudes of VAs available for hire through the internet. Your next step to success is narrowing your choices down to the perfect VA for you.

At this point, you should have made a list of the tasks you need your new VA to perform.

You can narrow it down further, or you can simply type keywords in Google and see what comes up:



TIP: Including your city name will result in more results immediately featuring actual virtual assistants, rather than more generic results.

And the advantage of hiring a local virtual assistant is that you can occasionally meet face-to-face for relationship building functions (such as Christmas lunches) or business meetings (brainstorming sessions, monthly check-ins, etc.).

However, the most effective and reliable ways to find the perfect VA consist of **starting with VAs you know** and acting on **word of mouth recommendations**.



## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

As an online entrepreneur, your circle of forum friends, Facebook Group or Page friends, Twitter followers and LinkedIn Group members most likely include several VAs.

Check out their profiles and their websites. See:

- What each VA specializes in
- If each VA has package rates
- If each website is professional
- If they have any of their own products to sell

If one of your potential candidates ticks all or most of your boxes, contact her and ask her if she has any available time.

Be specific but brief: Give her just enough information to know approximately how much time per month you need, what type of project, and whether or not you want regular, recurring, monthly service or if this is a “one-off” project.

Don't overwhelm your prospective VA with details. Your description shouldn't be any longer than the previous paragraph! Save the details for her response – and keep your responses focused.

Ask your business peers for recommendations, just giving the task type you want performed. Also look for their recommendations on the websites of VAs you have already checked out.

If you come up dry with this approach, you have two more to consider:

### **1. Using reputable VA agencies**

You can also search for VAs in online directories, but make sure of two facts first:

- The directory has a good reputation
- The directory deals only with VA services

#### **How to Check a Directory Reputation**

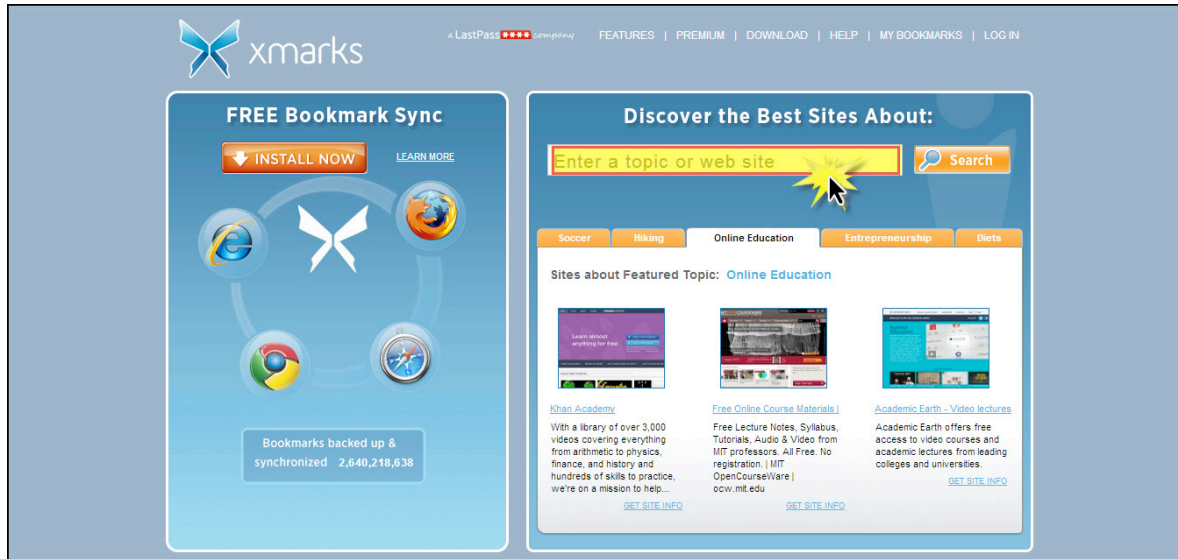
The easiest way is to run the directory's name through the [Xmarks](#) website.

The latter is a LastPass company, so has an excellent security and quality rating itself.

Simply enter the name of the directory you wish to check in the Xmarks search bar.



## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT



The best part?

Xmarks will suggest similar companies to check out.

Specific directories to consider:

- [VANetworking](#)
- [Canadian Virtual Assistant](#)

(If you are based in the U.S. and use a Canadian VA directory, do make sure that pricing is given in U.S.D.)

You can also browse well-known freelance directories such as [Elance](#) and [Guru](#).

## 2. Fiverr

If you just need a one-off project done or want to really try out a VA with low cost, no risk, you might consider checking the current listings on [Fiverr](#).

Fiverr has boosted its own reputation by providing consumers with ratings and reviews for each “gig” seller, along with information such as the average time it takes for turnaround, how many gigs the seller has completed and how many are in the current queue.

You can search using keywords like “Virtual Assistant” or look in the Virtual Assistant category.

Profiles of sellers will give you information such as the services they specialize in.

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

What you are looking for on Fiverr, however, is value – and we don't mean that in the traditional sense of the word. Look for VAs who offer tasks roughly appropriate for the price tag, which can be as little as five dollars.

In other words, if someone offers to write a twenty-page report for five dollars, give them a miss. Either there is something shady there or they are inexperienced, and don't know how to get the best value for their own time.

If someone offers to format the index page of a Kindle book for five dollars, however, they are maximizing their unique skill set to quickly do a task the average business owner would most likely spend hours being frustrated over. It's commensurate value.

And if they will send you a handy, one-page template for five dollars, or let you download a video demonstrating something simple, that is also an appropriate and shrewd use of their time: They create the product once only, and so can afford to distribute it at a low cost.

What you are looking for is a VA who is using Fiverr to gain exposure or re-purpose created products: One who is offering you a "taste" of her expertise so that you will invest in higher-priced gigs (which top-ranking sellers are allowed to offer).

Once you have compiled a list, interview your potential VA. Check to see if:

- She intimidates you
- She feels in need of too much direction
- Her clients are way above your level of profit, expertise and scope
- She doesn't ask questions or provide references
- She talks mostly about herself

These are all signs that a particular contractor will not be a good fit for your business.

Keep it objective, when interviewing VAs. Don't hire strictly on emotion: Someone you feel is a kindred spirit emotionally may also share your weaknesses. Instead, check to make sure:

- Her business roughly matches yours in size
- She strike a perfect balance between really listening and being authoritative on her field
- You feel comfortable with her
- She complements and fills in your weaknesses
- She has the skill sets you need

And always, always check out references!

## Step Four: Setting Up Perfect Communication

Project Management software is the way to go, if you really want to eliminate missed emails and confusion.

This provides one central “place” online where both you and your VA go to upload, view, check and download varied project components.

Good project management software such as [Teamwork](#) is the best way to start – particularly if you are planning to use more freelance team members for your projects. There is a free version to manage two projects for free forever or you can brand Teamwork with your logo and colors, have more projects and prices start at \$12.00 per month.

With the basic \$12.00 package, you get:

- 5 Projects
- 1GB storage
- The ability to work with unlimited clients and contractors such as your VA
- Real-time timeline of project activity
- Templates you can use for recurring projects

And more.

And at \$49 a month you can even integrate Dropbox, Google Drive and get your own custom domain.

There can be a learning curve. And some people find Teamwork much easier to start using and setting up than other similar systems. Start by finding a VA who can set up and customize Teamwork for you!

But no matter what project management software you do and don't use, make sure you follow these steps for clear, effective communication:

**1. Use a contract.**

This will either be one you draw up – or one your VA provides.

Starting out with expectations and duties laid out in contract form eliminates wrong assumptions, skewed expectations and gives you a handy reference point if something comes under dispute, diffusing ill-will over misunderstands. (“Oh yes: She *did* specify she charges time-and-a-half for weekends.”)

**2. Decide on a preferred communication method.**

There is no wrong or right method, but if you have severe phonophobia (yes; that IS the official term for “fear of telephones”) and she will only do business via the

telephone, she's not the right VA for you!

Clarify up front what methods you will use, when, and how often. (Example: You will check in with each other by email on Mondays and Thursdays before 10 a.m. For unexpected curveballs or on weekends, you will communicate by text message, requesting a phone call.)

And remember, even if you both live at opposite ends of the world, you can still attend virtual meetings via Google Hangout or Skype.

### 3. **Decide on a delivery protocol.**

You don't want projects or components being delivered to Basecamp, via email or even through Facebook all at once!

### 4. **Decide on other parameters**

For example, how many revisions she will do, if she is writing content. Or how many optional hours of overtime she will offer per month.

The more details you get ironed out in your initial meeting and contract, the less there will be room for errors. You'll both know what to expect from each other.

It is inevitable, however, that neither of you will think of everything, so give it time for your relationship with your VA to settle into a perfect groove. Keep things respectful and direct, and you can look forward to a strong, enjoyable, working relationship.

## **Step Five: Avoiding VA/Client Mistakes that Brand you as a Total Newbie**

Remember we talked about the right and wrong ways to hire a VA? We've gone through all the right ways, so let's take a quick peek at the wrong way.

Let's finish by looking at seven fatally common mistakes new work-at-home business owners make, when attempting to hire their first VA.

### 1. **Expecting your VA to think for you**

Some new business owners hire a VA, expecting her to take over the running of a business that isn't properly set up. While a VA can certainly help you set up your business, you need to know:

- What areas you need set up
- What tasks you want her to do
- How many hours you expect it to take
- What you're doing

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

A VA is not like one of those parents who take over a difficult homework task and do it themselves: She expects you to know your own business and have basic business competence. Yes, she will provide support in all the areas you need (providing you specify what these are and she specializes in these areas) but she will not make business decisions for you and take over your business while you abdicate from all responsibility.

### 2. Expecting your VA to be a coach or instructor

While some VAs do provide the equivalent of business mentoring, strategizing and coaching, she is advertising herself as a support person – not a coach. If your relationship includes a little of this in specific areas, you are lucky. But she is not there to teach you how to run your business; just to help you make it a success.

### 3. Not defining clear goals, tasks or responsibilities

Not knowing specifically what you need your VA to do is a sure-fire way to both brand yourself as inexperienced and unprofessional – and rack up huge bills, if a VA takes pity on you and wades in to clean up your messes.

Know exactly:

- What type of VA you need (what she specializes in)
- What tasks you need her to do
- Whether or not it will make you more money in the end if she does these tasks for you
- Approximately how many hours you expect each task to take

You should discuss your expectations with her when laying out the project, so she can advise you if she thinks your estimations are not on target in any area. That way, you can easily adjust your budget and expectations before ever starting the project. You can cut out a task, or decide to perform one yourself.

She will also tell you if she needs more “lead time” (time to prepare and set up the project or task), and this is the time to adjust this too.

You need to be prepared with your part of the planning, so she can help you plan perfectly.

### 4. Expecting your VA to read your mind

This is closely related to (and usually includes) all of points one, two and three. It is also part of the “expecting mom to do it for you” syndrome.

And even if you’re not doing that, one of the worst things you can do to a VA is change parameters on a project half way through and expect her to magically know about the changes – yet clients do this all the time.

### 5. Expecting your VA to be on call, 24/7

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

Your VA most likely works online for the same reasons you do: The chance to be around to watch children growing up, flexibility, the freedom to adjust her hours or a need to work around a unique situation (e.g. living on an island far from the nearest city).

She needs to eat, sleep, play – and any client expecting her to be on call twenty-four hours a day either hasn't thought things through or has an ego problem.

Most VAs will specify their hours, but if an emergency happens and you do need your VA to go above-and-beyond, expect to pay more and don't expect her to say "yes". If you have built a strong working relationship with your VA, she may bend her own rules and oblige in a disaster – but not if the extra hours starts to become a regular thing!

### 6. Expecting Your VA to be a Project Manager

While many VAs are more than capable of fulfilling this function, don't ever do this to them *unless they advertise "project management" as part of their skill set or as their primary specialty.* (And expect to pay more.)

### 7. Expecting Your VA to Perform Tasks she Doesn't Specialize in

Finally, don't expect your VA to do your bookkeeping or your web design or your shopping cart set up if she hasn't included these skills in her advertised areas of expertise.

Even if you wheedle her into taking on an unfamiliar task, it's a no-win situation for you, because you will be paying for her learning curve, as well as for the task. If this is something you both want – an addition to her skill set – and you can afford to invest in her training, that's fine: But never expect her to perform an unfamiliar task unless it is under these conditions.

## Step Six: How to Be the Perfect Client

The first four steps has already helped you to understand what a VA does and doesn't do (and how she does it). Putting yourself in the other person's shoes and understanding how she works goes a long way to ensuring you'll be her favorite client.

But you can up your game a little more...

### 1. Be available

Like your VA, you don't want to be available 24/7 and we certainly don't mean that! But don't "disappear" on your VA either.

If you're off for the summer and want to cut down your working hours while maintaining or increasing hers, do factor in the need to stay in touch. If you have to change your availability level, discuss it with your VA and come up with a plan.

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

(For example, if you are going to be spending every day on the beach and you know there's a sensitive, hot, time-limited project under way, arrange that you both temporarily allow texting during the hours of 11 a.m.-5 p.m. – or whatever hours suit you – so that she's not left hanging for an answer with a deadline looming.)

Or if you are going to be away for two weeks on a trip, decide in advance how you will both stay in touch.

### **2. Pay on time**

This applies mostly to clients who pay by monthly invoice. Your contractor is dependent on your payment for her own expenses, so treat her with respect. If you can't pay, reduce the hours or reconsider whether or not you really need a VA right now. (Ideal solution: Make more money!)

### **3. Communicate regularly, clearly and on time**

It is one thing to set up communication protocols – but do make sure you observe them!

### **4. Provide her with everything she needs to complete a project**

That includes information, time, ways to contact other team members and parameters.

(If you want to provide her with hardware or software, remember you can deduct this as a “client gift”.)



**5. Recommend her business**

Just as your success is her success, her success is also yours. Let people know you employ the best. Let her know you are proud of working with her. Be generous in acknowledging her expertise and value.

If you have built up a great client working relationship – and especially if she has greatly contributed to your own success – you will always be the Superclient at the top of her list.

**6. Appreciate your VA**

Above all, say “thank you” – especially when she has gone above and beyond, or solved a difficult problem or simply done a great job.

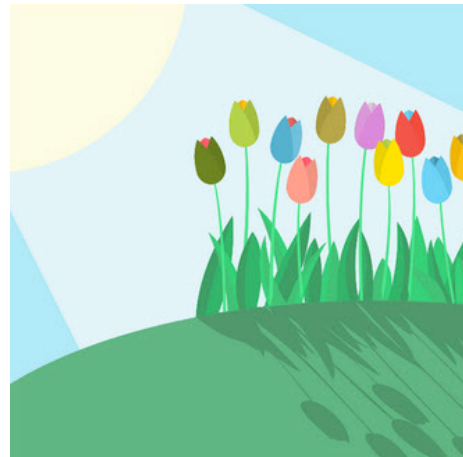
Thanks and appreciation go a long way towards building loyalty and a happy, working relationship.

## Conclusion

Hiring the right VA when you are ready can result in all sorts of benefits for you and your business.

She can help you:

- Streamline your business processes
- Complete projects without hitches
- Save money – and time
- Take care of overloads and emergencies
- Help with seasonal promotions
- By providing a second set of eyes on occasion, pointing out potential glitches you don't “see” through overfamiliarity or for some other reason
- By being your “voice” if you don't deal well with interruptions or interpersonal relationships during working hours
- Build your business (by freeing up your time on nitty-gritty tasks)



If you familiarize yourself with – and practice – the first five steps in this workbook, you will automatically never make any of the mistakes in Step Six. Expect to find a fabulous VA (or VA team) – and run your business efficiently, cost effectively and with a maximum return on all your investments, like a true professional.

## HIRING AND WORKING WITH A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT



Deanna Maio, Delegation & Implementation Strategist and Speaker helps business owners, leaders, and entrepreneurs who are doing too much figure out how to create the right plan, systems, and team to get more done, have more time, and catapult their income.

Deanna is the creator of the Delegated to Done Formula and the co-author of GPS for Success with Dr. Steven Covey, Dr. John Gray, and Les Brown. She was selected as one of the 20 Best Business Coaches in 2013 by ClearSimpleMarketing.com and selected The Best of Portland 2013 and Business Management Consultant of the Year and was honored with the same award in 2014.

Deanna holds a certificate in Project Management from Portland State University; is a certified trainer for NetSpeedLeadership & Blazing Service, a certified Myers-Briggs Facilitator with 10 years experience using that tool with individuals, managers, leaders and team.

Given all that she has accomplished and as quickly as she has done it, it's no wonder that Deanna believes time is our most precious commodity. She says, "Once a moment has passed, it's gone forever. And if time equals money then in business we must be as productive as possible. Completing the work required as quickly as you can while achieving the desired result is critical to reaching our goals and delivering quality service and products to our customers."

She recognizes that most businesses face daunting challenges as they grow. Failing to address these challenges, quickly, can have a devastating impact on performance and profitability. Deanna believes and teaches that if everyone in an organization has the right systems and tools to be productive, morale increases, attrition decreases, and profits go up.

With her entertaining teaching style and experience in organizations large and small, Deanna is a recognized leader in her field and she continues to innovate, create, and build new thought processes for making businesses more productive and even more profitable.

When she's not teaching or coaching her clients you might find her singing 1940s swing with her band, Deanna & the Downbeats, cooking healthy meals, or enjoying one of her many favorite television shows or listening to live music in her hometown of Portland, Oregon.