



THE ESSENTIAL VIRTUAL ASSISTANT GEAR

A DECENT COMPUTER

Treat your computer like your best friend, and ally – because in this profession, your computer truly is your most valuable asset.

Whether you work on a Mac or a PC make sure that it's set up with the latest software, and an up to date anti-virus program. The last thing you want is for your computer to crash and your valuable work, and data to be lost.

A (VERY) RELIABLE INTERNET CONNECTION

Second essential is a reliable Internet provider. For those of you who travel or who want to work out of your home office there are great options for mobile Wi-Fi service providers. Each country is different so search for a provider that allows you to connect no matter where you are. TepWireless <https://www.tepwireless.com/> provides this option although we are not affiliated, and cannot recommend their reliability.

And of course you can find listings for Internet cafes everywhere in the world – most large cities will now allow you to link up to their network. Be mindful though of cyber security. Sharing a network does provide more risks for possible computer hacks!

A PROFESSIONAL ONLINE PRESENCE

Since you are aspiring (or already working) with clients virtually, a huge success factor is your online presence. Don't underestimate what a professional photo on your LinkedIn profile can do in inspiring confidence in your aptitude, and services!

If at all possible, create a one-page profile with an overview of your professional skills, and a little something personal too. You can use sites such as <https://branded.me/> or <https://about.me/> to showcase your talent. This is really useful when you bid on a job, or even speak to a potential client at a networking event as it allows you to link your proposal with your online profile or to include it in an email.

THE CLOUD FOR FILE SHARING AND SAVING

Make sure that your set up includes the ability to safely save client files in the cloud instead of on your personal computer harddrive. This is important for three reasons:

- 1) The files are proprietary information of the clients
- 2) Files can be accessed by both you, and your clients at anytime
- 3) Files are safe even if your computer crashes!

The best two options for file sharing and saving in the cloud are either Dropbox or Google Drive. You can find more information about both options from our write-ups [here](#) and [here](#).

In most cases your clients will already have a system set up, and they will be keen to share a folder with you – but if they don't be ready to suggest options, and to emphasize why cloud saving and sharing will make your partnership that much more professional, and secure.

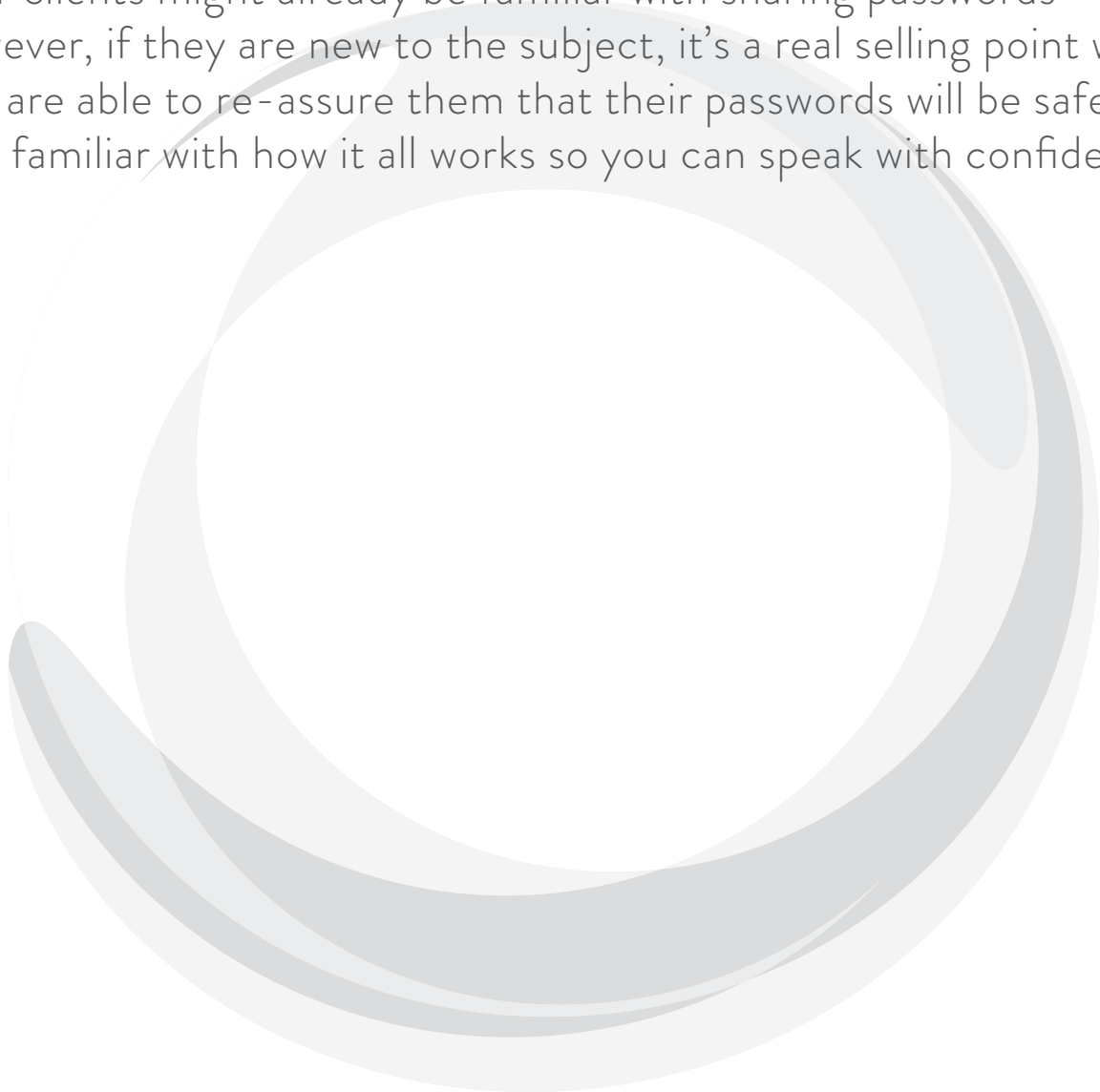
And one last bit of advice; treat your electronic files just the same as an in-office filing cabinet. That is – neat and organized, with clear labels, and separate folders for each client!

SHARING PASSWORDS

Similarly to file sharing, there are now secure ways to share passwords in the cloud, which really enhances your ability to collaborate, and support your clients with a myriad of tasks from booking travel to login into email accounts or social media platforms.

You will find a whole host of options online, and one of them is Passpack, which offers a free version loaded with great features. Read our write up [here](#) for more information.

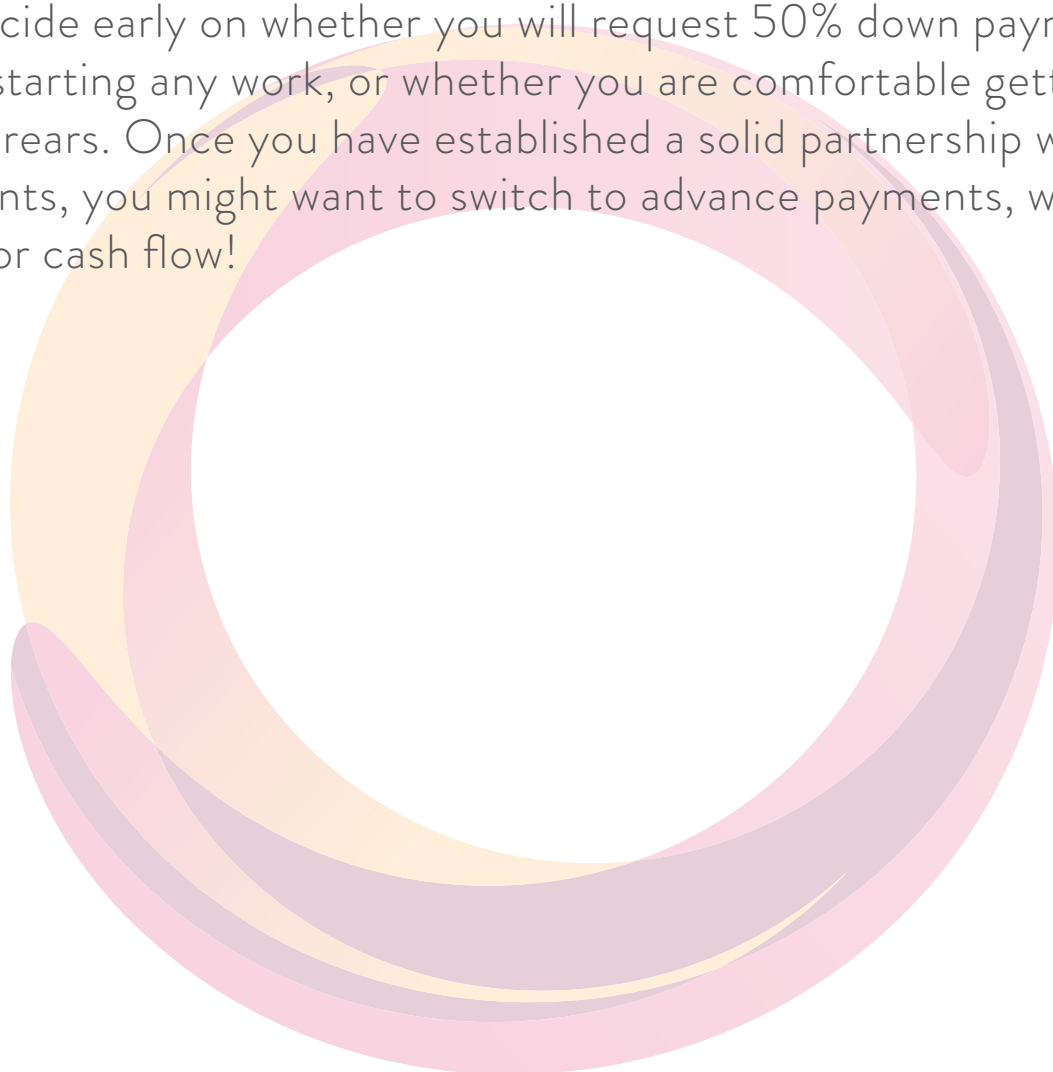
Your clients might already be familiar with sharing passwords however, if they are new to the subject, it's a real selling point when you are able to re-assure them that their passwords will be safe. Get familiar with how it all works so you can speak with confidence!



TIME TRACKING & GETTING PAID

Most of your client work will be done on an hourly basis and so for this reason, it's absolutely essential that you equip yourself with a way to bill clients accurately for the time you spend on their tasks. We recommend Freshbooks as the easiest online payment software to track your time with their integrated time tracker, and to invoice clients, and receive payments online. There is a forever-free version, and also a paid version with added features. You can read more about Freshbooks [here](#).

Getting paid on time is key to sustaining your virtual assistant business. Decide early on whether you will request 50% down payment prior to starting any work, or whether you are comfortable getting paid in arrears. Once you have established a solid partnership with your clients, you might want to switch to advance payments, which is ideal for cash flow!



LEGAL STUFF

Not the most exciting part but nonetheless important! You can find lots of Freelancer contractual agreements online, and we you will find a Non-Disclosure Agreement in the [Resource](#) section of our site.

Make use of a simple contract to confirm payment terms, and to clearly outline what clients can expect from using your services. Make use of an NDA to build confidence with clients, and re-affirm your commitment to client confidentiality.

And of course, no need to send any paperwork! We recommend Signable to send your contract or NDA online and secure signatures within minutes! You can read more about it [here](#).

IN SUMMARY

You don't need much to get set up, and started as a virtual assistant. With a little organization, a good online profile, and some essential software, which in most cases come as a free version - you can begin sending proposals for work, and showcasing your talent!