

Freelance/Contract Virtual Paralegal: How they can help your law office.

The legal profession has changed over time. Gone are the days of using a manual typewriter, and telephones as the only method for communication between attorney and client. Today's typical law office setting includes computers, fax machines, voice mail, instant messaging, email, and various other technology driven devices.

What is a Virtual Paralegal?

The evolution of technology and the Internet has made it possible for professionals to work from home in what is considered a "virtual office". A virtual paralegal is a highly trained independently contracted business owner, who is not considered an employee of the law office he or she is performing work for. Virtual paralegals are cost effective since they are only paid for the work they perform. All work is performed virtually by utilizing telephones, fax, email, and other internet established technology, providing the same support system to a law office as a regular employee would, but at a lower cost to the law office.

How can a Virtual Paralegal save you money?

A Virtual Paralegal is cost effective to your law office compared to hiring an in house employee to perform the same work. With hiring an in house employee also comes the expense of additional computers, software, telephone lines, office supplies, ect. By contracting a virtual paralegal the law office saves thousands of dollars a year by eliminating overhead costs, employee overtime, the need to train, employee dental/health or other benefits, vacation and sick pay, employee taxes, FICA, and additional office equipment, office space or supplies. Since the virtual paralegal bills hourly for work performed for a law office, the law office can benefit from billing their clients for the virtual paralegal's work.

How can you trust a Virtual Paralegal?

You will most likely never meet your virtual paralegal in person. So how can you trust that they will perform the work requested in the same confidential and professional manner as an employed paralegal? As any business owner, the virtual paralegal is concerned with the success and growth of their business. Virtual paralegals receive the same college training as employed paralegals and generally have years of in office experience prior to starting their own virtual business. Ask the virtual paralegal for their resume, references, and work samples just as you would ask a potential employee prior to hiring. Conduct a telephone interview with the virtual paralegal prior to contracting them and request a copy of their contract for review. A well trained virtual paralegal will have the ability to provide you with the same information about their qualifications, and follow the same code of ethics, confidentiality, and non-disclosure as a potential employee would.

Is a Virtual Paralegal right for you?

As a business owner, you most likely take the expense of running your business very seriously. It is not cost effective for any business to incur unnecessary expenditures. Money saved is money in your pocket. By hiring a paralegal to work in your office, you are adding to your office expense each year. By contracting a virtual paralegal to perform the same work will save you thousands on unnecessary expenditures. If saving your business money each year is important to you and your business, and your office has internet access, email, telephone and fax service, then a virtual paralegal is right for you.

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