

Virtual Personal Assistants

Matthew N. O. Sadiku¹, Paul A. Adekunle², Janet O. Sadiku³

¹Roy G. Perry College of Engineering, Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, TX, USA

²International Institute of Professional Security, Lagos, Nigeria

³Juliana King University, Houston, TX, USA

ABSTRACT

A virtual assistant is a remote administrative assistant who works for a company or individual on a self-employed, or contract basis. It works remotely, using technology to complete assignments. It should be tech-savvy, having a wide range of computer skills and a high level of proficiency with commonly used software and business programs. Personal virtual assistants (VPAs) are remote professionals who offer a wide range of services tailored to individual needs, from managing schedules to handling daily tasks. They are individuals or systems that provide administrative and personal support services remotely, often via digital channels like email or messaging. They can handle tasks ranging from scheduling appointments and managing emails to research, travel arrangements, and even some physical tasks like grocery shopping. This paper introduces the readers to virtual assistants in general and virtual personal assistants in particular.

KEYWORDS: *artificial intelligence, virtual assistants, virtual personal assistants*

How to cite this paper: Matthew N. O. Sadiku | Paul A. Adekunle | Janet O. Sadiku "Virtual Personal Assistants" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-9 | Issue-2, April 2025, pp.1182-1188,

URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd79720.pdf



IJTSRD79720

Copyright © 2025 by author (s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



INTRODUCTION

Many individuals and businesses find themselves in need of support to keep up with the demands of daily life and work. That is where the concept of a virtual assistant comes into play. A virtual assistant is an independent contractor who provides administrative services to clients while operating outside of the client's office. People employed as virtual assistants typically operate from a home office and often have several years of experience as an administrative assistant. Virtual assistants have become more prominent as small businesses and startups rely on virtual offices. As working from home has become more accepted for both workers and employers, the demand for skilled virtual assistants is expected to grow [1]. The concept of a virtual assistant is shown in Figure 1 [2].

Just as there are many different ways to refer to a real-world assistant, there are multiple names for the variations of AI virtual assistant. Among others, you may also know them as a [3]:

- Virtual assistant
- Knowledge assistant

- Conversational AI
- AI-powered virtual assistant
- Digital assistant
- Predictive chatbot
- Generative AI assistant
- AI chat agent
- Customer support assistant
- Virtual agent

There are different kinds of visual assistants. For example, we have:

- Virtual Personal Assistants
- Virtual Legal Assistants
- Virtual Business Assistants
- Virtual Executive Assistants
- Virtual Chef Assistants

So we see that virtual personal assistants (VPAs) can be distinguished from general virtual assistants. While virtual assistants (VAs) offer a wider spectrum of services, accommodating not only personal but also diverse business needs, VPAs are adept at offering highly personalized support tailored to individual needs.

WHAT IS VIRTUAL PERSONAL ASSISTANT?

A virtual personal assistant (VPA) is a professional who provides administrative, technical, or creative assistance to clients remotely from their own location, using online communication tools such as email, messaging, and video conferencing. It is an online-based support system that provides administrative and remove personal assistant services to individuals and businesses. Unlike a traditional personal assistant, an online personal assistant operates remotely, utilizing modern technologies to perform tasks. VPAs are becoming increasingly popular due to the convenience and efficiency they offer. With the increasing demands of work, family, and personal life, many individuals and businesses are opting for remote personal assistants to help manage their workload, prioritize tasks, and free up their time to focus on what is important. Many of us already work with rudimentary versions of virtual personal assistants today, when we use Google Now, Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa, and Microsoft's Cortana. A typical virtual personal assistant is shown in Figure 2 [4].

Although there are no hard-and-fast educational requirements to become a virtual assistant, many clients will look for virtual assistants who have some higher-level education or specialized training. The compensation varies depending on what the assignment is and who you are working for. When hiring a personal virtual assistant, having a strong educational background is not mandatory. But at least a high school diploma or bachelor's degree show they are well knowledgeable. Before hiring a virtual assistant, the client can ensure a smoother working relationship by creating detailed instructions about tasks they need to have performed. LinkedIn is a great platform to find an online personal assistant, as it is harder for contractors to be anonymous on the platform, giving you a better idea of who you are working with.

HOW VIRTUAL PERSONAL ASSISTANT WORKS

Microsoft has published a Microsoft template for building virtual assistants and skills. With the template, you can create a virtual assistant, powered by a text based experience with support for limited rich cards with actions. Virtual assistant is a Microsoft open-source template that enables you to create a robust conversational solution while maintaining full control of user experience, organizational branding, and necessary data [4]. Virtual personal assistants use the power of the Internet, as well as different instant messaging and other technologically advanced tools, in

communicating with clients and doing their tasks. Conversational AI uses machine learning to take a user question and generate an answer in natural language. The systems are trained on large amounts of data, usually an enterprise's own documentation and/or the wider Internet, which helps the model to understand and process human language and converse naturally with users. Figure 3 shows the building blocks of VPAs [5].

Many companies have used the dialogue systems technology to establish various kinds of virtual personal assistants (VPAs) based on their applications and areas, such as Microsoft's Cortana, Apple's Siri, Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, and Facebook's M.

Some of the world's best-known companies make huge investments that will significantly change our lives in the years ahead.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VIRTUAL PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

The specific duties of a virtual assistant vary according to the needs of the client and the terms of the contract. Although VPAs are known for handling a range of tasks, administrative work is one of the most common responsibilities of VPAs. Some of the tasks performed by virtual assistants include data entry, appointment scheduling, email management, social media management, customer service, and research. Many VPAs possess specialized skills in areas such as marketing, data analysis, and customer service, allowing them to offer even more value to their clients. The list of tasks that can be delegated to a VPA is long and varied, and the benefits are numerous. They include [3]:

1. Data entry and management
2. Schedule management
3. Answering phone calls
4. Email management and organization
5. Customer service and support
6. Social media management
7. Online research and data collection
8. Travel arrangements and booking
9. Bookkeeping and financial management
10. Content writing and copywriting
11. Website maintenance
12. Graphic design and video editing
13. Marketing and advertising support
14. Presentation creation
15. HR and recruitment support

OTHER APPLICATIONS OF VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

Application of virtual assistants is not limited to personal virtual assistants. They also apply in the following ways:

- **Virtual Executive Assistants:** Virtual assistants are gaining popularity as executives worldwide become more comfortable with remote employees. A virtual executive assistant is a usually part-time remote administrative assistant dedicated to a specific executive or team. VEAs enable busy executives to maximize their time, move their businesses forward, and minimize the important but non-business-critical tasks that become distractions. A traditional virtual assistant performs repetitive admin tasks based on documented processes, while a virtual executive assistant might help define and establish those processes. What a VEA does is illustrated in Figure 4 [6], while Figure 5 shows a typical virtual executive assistant [7].
- **Virtual Business Assistants:** These are VAs designed for providing assistant services for business. These virtual assistants are hand-picked based on your unique requirements, and are supported by a team of professionals who onboard, train and supervise them on an ongoing basis. In today's digital era, the demand for virtual assistants is on the rise as businesses and entrepreneurs seek efficient ways to manage their workload remotely. Starting a virtual assistant business is an excellent opportunity for those looking to work from home, gain flexible hours, and leverage their existing skills. Starting a virtual assistant business can be a rewarding venture, offering low startup costs, flexibility, and the ability to work from virtually anywhere [4].
- **Virtual Legal Assistant:** A virtual legal assistant (VLA) is a skilled professional who provides remote assistance to legal practitioners and law firms. They provide remote administrative, technical, and legal support to lawyers or law firms, handling tasks like document management, scheduling, client communication, and legal research, freeing up attorneys for core legal work. VLAs are transforming the legal industry by bringing a new level of efficiency and expertise. With a rapid development of law firms, legal virtual assistants have been in much demand because they play a major role in analyzing significant legal documents, drafting various contracts and agreements for the company, handling different case laws, managing the paperwork of the firm, etc. The role of a legal virtual assistant is dynamic and indispensable. Virtual legal assistants are leading the charge in the digital transformation of the legal industry, revolutionizing traditional business models

through the implementation of artificial intelligence [8].

BENEFITS

VPAs are highly flexible, cost-effective, and offer a wide range of benefits that make them an attractive option for businesses of all sizes. Since the virtual assistant works offsite, there is no need for a desk or other workspace at the company's office. For the client, one advantage of hiring a virtual assistant is the flexibility to contract for just the services they need. For small business owners, hiring a virtual assistant can help them free up valuable hours to focus on growing the business and generating revenue. An AI virtual assistant can be easy to deploy without the need for a large specialized team, making it more affordable and more scalable, and bringing efficiency, standardization, and better experience to the fore. Other benefits of VPAs include the following [9]:

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** The number one reason why businesses opt for VAs is because they are cost-efficient. Virtual personal assistants may handle the personal and professional responsibilities of professionals or individuals in a flexible and cost-effective manner. Hiring a virtual personal assistant can be more cost-effective than hiring a full-time employee. Contrary to the initial perception of an added expense, hiring a virtual personal assistant can lead to significant financial savings, making virtual assistance a financially viable option for many businesses. The time, effort, and resources saved by outsourcing tasks can far outweigh the costs involved.
- **Time Savings:** Handing over routine tasks to VA helps you to save more time for working on important objectives and tasks that generate revenue, or things strategic in nature. Such improved efficiency contributes to increased productivity and thus expansion of the business.
- **Productivity:** In the current business landscape, speed is the ultimate benefactor. The best way to be successful is through maximizing efficiency and productivity. Hiring a virtual personal assistant is increasingly recognized as a strategic advantage for entrepreneurs, business owners, and busy professionals around the world. By delegating non-core tasks to these dedicated assistants, you not only free up essential time but also boost your productivity and maintain a better work-life balance. The productivity gains enabled by AI virtual assistants is especially noticeable in the knowledge sector. If you are constantly attached to the personal tasks that dominate your

daily life, you are not going to be as productive as you otherwise could be.

- *Efficiency:* VPAs handle tasks with precision and speed, allowing executives and other individuals to accomplish more in less time. Virtual assistants often come equipped with specific skills and expertise that may not be available in-house, providing small businesses and professionals with the expert support they need for tasks like lead generation and executive assistance.
- *Unparalleled Flexibility:* Virtual personal assistants can work on a part-time or contract basis, allowing for flexible staffing needs. They offer unmatched flexibility to meet the specific needs of their clients. Whether it is a few hours per week or additional support during peak business periods, these assistants can adjust their schedules to provide service levels that match the varying demands of your workload.
- *Scalability:* One of the most significant advantages of a VPA is scalability. As your business grows, the demands on your time will increase. A VPA can scale their services to match your growing needs, ensuring that no matter how big your operations get, you always have the support you need.
- *Specialized Skills:* VAs often have varying skill sets and specializations in different fields, like administrative support, digital marketing, and graphic design. VPAs can provide specialized skills and knowledge in various areas, such as social media management, web development, or graphic design. Many people automatically assume they can write anything in the content, but professionally written content by a skilled writer can bring in far better results.
- *24/7 Availability:* According to their location and schedule, VAs like Amazon virtual assistant can give help beyond the standard business hours, thus making certain the tasks are done on time and deadlines are met even during off-duty hours.

CHALLENGES

Navigating the complexities of modern-day professional life often presents challenges that can be overwhelming. Many companies have banned employees from using consumer chatbots while on company systems because of the risk of sensitive data leaks. Users may also be reluctant to share personal or sensitive information with an AI virtual assistant. Other challenges include [10]:

- *High Cost:* Most personal assistants are costly. Hiring a full-time executive personal assistant can

be expensive. Between the hours worked, the yearly salary, the benefits, the vacation time, it can add up more quickly than you might imagine.

- *Professionalism:* VAs and VPAs are expected to be competent and reliable. While assistants in both roles are typically not full-time or in-house, a level of professionalism is expected.
- *Communication Skills:* Your personal VA might need to take your phone calls or communicate with clients. Having excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, helps the VA work efficiently.
- *Computer Skills:* Because they work remotely, all VAs and VPAs need to possess basic computer skills.
- *Organizational Skills:* You are hiring a VA who can manage your time, meet deadlines, and keep you on time everywhere. That is why organizational and time-management skills are two core skills of any virtual assistant.
- *Language Skills:* Proficiency in the English language is a must. Being a personal assistant, they may need to communicate with your clients in English on your behalf. If the VA is from another country, then knowing your preferred language can be helpful for you. But as long as they know English, this is not problematic.
- *Trustworthiness:* Your virtual assistant supports multiple facets of your life and business, so it is vitally important that you find someone you can trust.
- *Professional Experience:* In-house VPA may or may not come with a background of professional experience and adequate skills. It can be a hit or miss. Unlike in-house PAs, whose experience and professionalism varies, you can rest assured that your VPAs come from a wide array of professional backgrounds and skills.
- *Reliability:* There is always the risk of an in-house VPA resigning at any possible moment. This also plays a part in the experience as well. An in-house PA who does not have a professional background will more likely resign quicker than an experienced in-house PA.

CONCLUSION

A virtual personal assistant is not just a dispensable luxury but an indispensable necessity for modern professionals. They offer a flexible, cost-effective solution to many of the challenges faced in today's fast-paced business environment. They offer a wide range of benefits and can be a valuable addition to

any individual or business looking to improve their productivity and efficiency. For many business owners, executives, entrepreneurs, and even freelancers, a personal assistant is an unmistakable sign that they have “made it.”

Today’s AI assistants can now come pre-trained on large volumes of data in multiple languages, and can write, summarize, synthesize, and follow instructions out of the box.

New opportunities are opening up for virtual assistants who are skilled in social media, content management, blog post writing, graphic design, and Internet marketing. As businesses move forward in a very changing environment, VPAs remain an extraordinary tool to help them become more flexible and powerful and remain ahead of the competition. More information on virtual personal assistants is available from the books in [11-18].

REFERENCES

- [1] W. Kenton, “What is a virtual assistant, and what does one do?” May 2024, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/v/virtual-assistant.asp>
- [2] What is a virtual AI assistant?” September 2024, <https://cohere.com/blog/virtual-ai-assistants>
- [3] “What is a virtual personal assistant,” <https://tasksassistant.com/what-is-a-virtual-personal-assistant/>
- [4] “15 Tasks a virtual personal assistant can manage for you,” <https://ossisto.com/blog/15-benefits-of-virtual-personal-assistant/>
- [5] “How to start a virtual assistant business: A comprehensive guide,” July 2024, <https://www.remotedesk.com/blogs/how-to-start-a-virtual-assistant-business-a-comprehensive-guide>
- [6] “Six building blocks for a virtual personal assistant,” October 2015, <https://www.the-vital-edge.com/virtual-personal-assistant/>
- [7] B. Peatman, “The ultimate guide to virtual executive assistants in 2025,” January 2025, <https://www.prialto.com/blog/executive-assistants>
- [8] “6 Tips for building and maintaining trust as a virtual executive assistant,” <https://worxbee.com/articles/6-tips-for-building-and-maintaining-trust-as-a-virtual-executive-assistant>
- [9] “How virtual legal assistants are transforming the legal industry,” <https://www.virtuallatinos.com/blog/virtual-legal-assistants-industry/>
- [10] “Virtual personal assistant: The definite guide,” <https://www.virtuallatinos.com/blog/virtual-personal-assistants/>
- [11] K. Baratta, “Virtual assistants vs virtual personal assistants: Which do you need?” February 2023, <https://www.prialto.com/blog/virtual-personal-assistants>
- [12] M. Smith, *Become A Successful Virtual Assistant: Learn the Business Side & Ditch 9 to 5*. Kindle Edition, 2018.
- [13] Y. Sreda and M. Rivers, *Healthy Eating Rules and Virtual Chef Assistant*. Independently Published, 2024.
- [14] P. Fair, *Maximizing ChatGPT for Executive Assistants: A Comprehensive Guide*. Independently Published, 2024.
- [15] A. Soofastaei (ed.), *Virtual Assistant*. IntechOpen, 2021.
- [16] M. Smith, *Hire the Right Virtual Assistant: How the Right VA Will Make Your Life Easier, Create Time, and Make You More Money*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.
- [17] S. Young, *Hey Cyba: The Inner Workings of a Virtual Personal Assistant*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- [18] M.B. Chatfield, *AI in Your Pocket: The Evolution of Virtual Personal Assistants for Mobile Devices*. M.B. Chatfield, undated.
- [19] L. Briggs, *How to Become a Virtual Assistant: Start Your Own Business from Home*. Author Academy Elite, 2022.

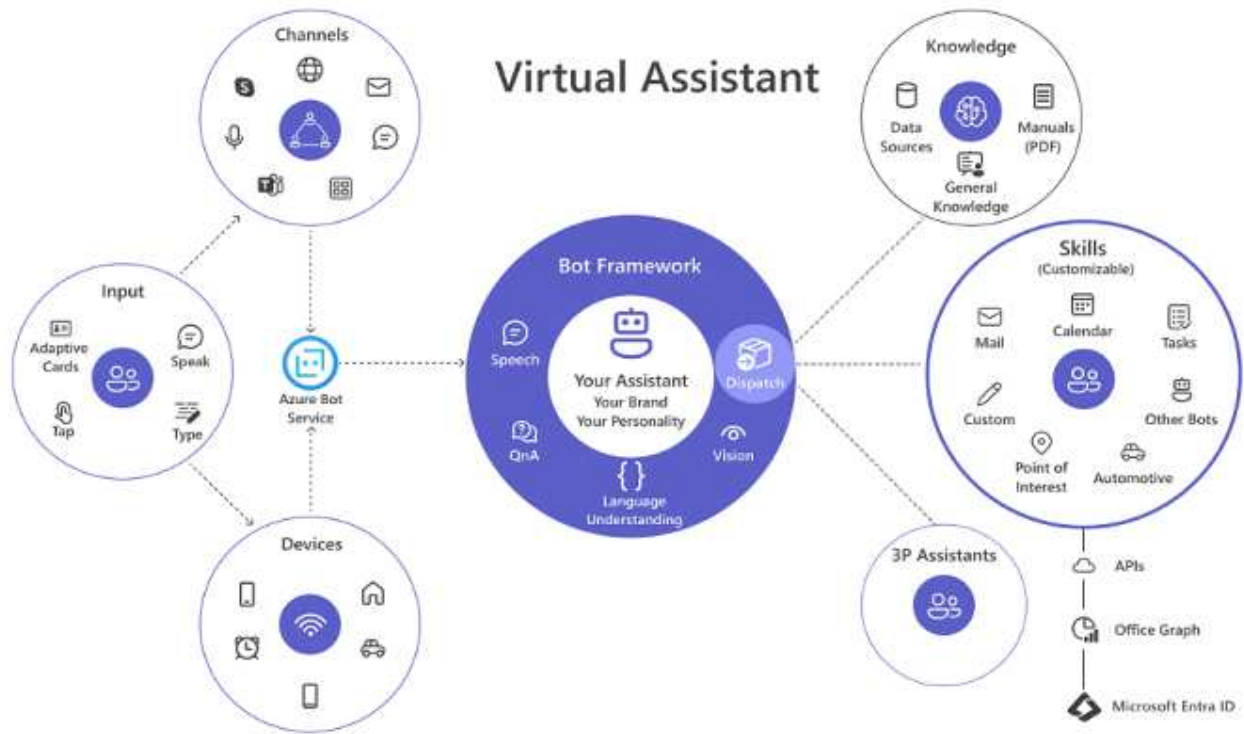


Figure 1 The concept of a virtual assistant [2].



Figure 2 A typical virtual personal assistant [4].

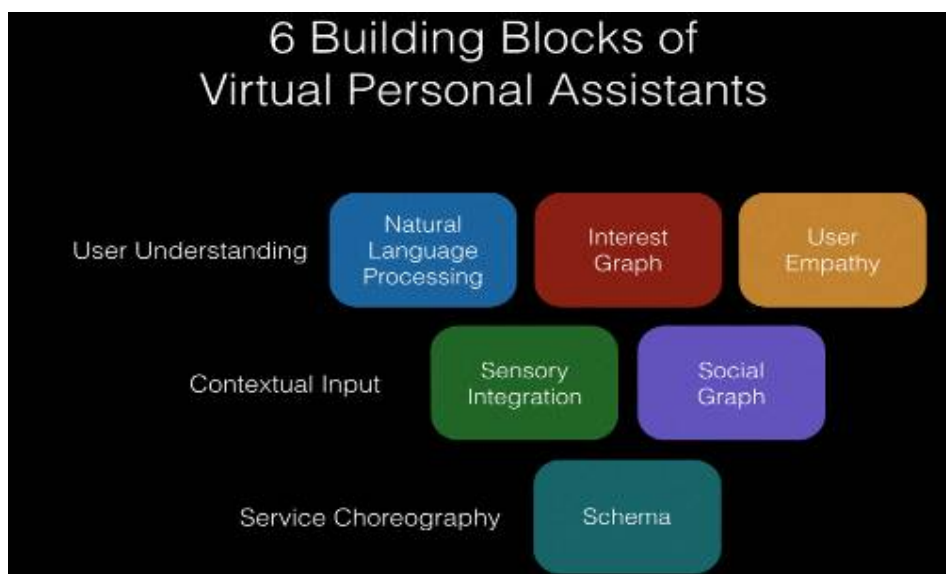


Figure 3 The building blocks of VPAs [5].



Figure 4 What a virtual executive assistant does [6].



Figure 5 A typical virtual executive assistant [7].