



## Virtual Temps are more flexible, more productive

**Using Temps to cover short term vacancies or staff absences has been the traditional approach for many years, even though we all know that getting the right person can be a lottery. Despite complaints about training and briefing each new person, a lack of commitment and unreliability, hiring a Temp has been the only real option when you need cover.**



Company managers now have more resourcing options, from part time and temporary positions to contractors and permanent hires. However suitable the employee or perfect the contract of employment, managers will still have to deal with traditional staffing problems, covering workload peaks, long term sickness and absences (e.g. maternity leave).

In this article we examine how using “Virtual Temps” can offer a consistently better alternative on a highly cost effective basis.

### **What Are Virtual Temps?**

Virtual Temps are self-sufficient PAs, Secretaries and Administrators who are set up with internet access and the IT equipment necessary, to work with you remotely. Provided you grant them access to your network and systems – as many companies already grant to their own remote staff - they can do almost everything an office-based worker can do.

A Virtual Temp works along similar lines to a Virtual Assistant: they are assigned to you although they may have other clients. They may also work in a team, and for some of your work it may make sense to delegate work to a colleague, so you get access to greater capacity and wider skills, as well as instant cover for their holidays and sickness.

Unlike traditional Temps, a Virtual Temp will always be your Temp on-hand whenever you need them. This consistency and continuity has several benefits:

- You only brief them on your work once
- Your staff get to know them as a colleague
- Your customers will accept them as “one of the team”

Another advantage is that you only pay for their productive time. Often, traditional Temps spend a lot of time waiting around, taking breaks and getting to know your business and other staff. This can account for 50-75% of their time, depending on how well they are managed.

Because Virtual Temps are responsible for maintaining their own customers, their incentive to perform well is far stronger than most employees or traditional Temps.



## Going Virtual Has Real Benefits

The benefits of Virtual Temps are wide ranging, some of which have already been mentioned in this article. These are only offset by the potential risks associated with finding the “right person” and giving them access to your systems.

The reality is that you have no greater control than with a traditional Temp. However, with Virtual Temps you can minimise security risks by taking up references from their other long term clients and feed them responsibility over time as trust grows. The security risk is also reduced because it is one person, not a stream of unknown people coming through your door.

Once comfortable with the idea of hiring a Virtual Temp, you can sit back and enjoy the benefits:

- Only paying for productive hours
- Increased productivity and task focus
- Always there when you need help
- Forever committed to your success
- Access to a wider skills and capacity
- Less hassle... the work just gets done

## Taking The Plunge

Venturing into new territory always requires a first step. It’s easy to stick with what we are familiar with, even if it’s not ideal – “better the devil you know” as they say. But, the benefits in this case far outweigh the risks and it’s possible to test the water without much effort.

I would recommend that you get to know your Virtual Temp gradually before taking the plunge, unless the work is routine and non-invasive for the company (i.e. can be done without access to company networks and systems). You can do this at any time, feeding them work on a pay-as-you-go basis and assessing the quality of the person and their work step-by-step along the way.

This means thinking and planning ahead – which is not a bad thing – so you effectively train and groom your Virtual Temp for the type of work you require before it materialises with urgency. This way you and she are prepared for the first temporary assignment: you say go, and she hits the ground running, just as if regular employees were doing the job. Perfect!

If you would like to find out more about Office Lifeline’s [Virtual Temping Services](#), you can contact me on 01926 659 120, or via email at [anna@office-lifeline.co.uk](mailto:anna@office-lifeline.co.uk).

### About the author

Anna Isaacs is the founder of Office Lifeline, a Warwickshire based Virtual Office Services business, providing Virtual PA, Admin and Typing services. Anna had a successful career as an Executive PA in several blue chip companies before setting up Office Lifeline in early 2007. In 2010 she won the prestigious National Women On Their Way Award for Best Online Business and was a finalist for the Remote Worker BT Home Business Award.

