

The Staffcentrix
**Portable Career & Virtual Assisting Training Program™
for Military Spouses**

The uniformed services have long recognized that the mobility requirements of a modern military often place a severe burden on the career and employment prospects of the service member's spouse.

The spouse's sacrifice and the resulting diminished revenues directly impact the family's economic and psychological quality of life, and raise critical issues involving recruitment, retention, and readiness.

Advances in telecommunications and the evolution of corporate outsourcing toward the "virtual" model have finally converged to create a viable career choice for the transient military family... the Military Spouse Virtual Assistant, or MSVA.



*A World-Class Training Program for U.S. Military Spouses
from the People Who Built the Virtual Assisting Industry*

What is a Virtual Assistant?

A Virtual Assistant (VA) is an **independent contractor working from home**, providing support services to businesses—ranging from “secretarial” work to bookkeeping to complex corporate consulting—via email, phone and fax.

Email, telephone and fax permit the VA to accept work, and deliver it, across oceans or continents, *regardless of the isolation of the base or post*, or local economic conditions. VAs set their own schedules, working a few or many hours per week. (Most work part-time.)

What Types of Services Are Virtual Assistants Offering?

The types of services VAs are offering their clients are as varying as the VAs themselves. Here's a sampling:

Academic Writing, Accounting Services, Audio/Visual Production, Business Coaching, Business Plan Writing, Business Writing, Collection Services, Competitive Research, Concierge Services, Database Management, Desktop Publishing, Document Scanning, Editing/Proofreading, Entertainment Industry Support, Event Planning, File Conversion, Fundraising, General Transcription, Gov't. Procurement Expertise, Grant Proposals, Graphic Design, Graphic Scanning, Growth Advisory Services, HR Expertise, Insurance Broker/Agent Support, Internet Research, Interpreting, Import/Export Support, Intranet Development & Management, Legal Secretarial, Legal Transcription, Litigation Support, Live Phone Answering, Mailing Services, Marketing & Advertising, Market Research, Medical Transcription, Multimedia Presentation, Nonprofit Support Services, Office Management, Paralegal Services, Payroll Services, Phone-in Transcription, Private Investigation Support, Programming, Public Relations, Realtor Support, Resume Writing, Spreadsheets, Statements/Billing, Systems Management, Technical Writing & Editing, Translating Services, Voice Services, Voicemail for Clients, Website Design, Word Processing

Program Objective

To train U.S. Military Spouses to build successful businesses that are financially viable, portable, and personally gratifying, thereby helping them overcome the career obstacles they often face as a result of frequent moves and sometimes-isolated posts. And, in the process of doing this, to assist these women and men in finding improved self-esteem, better quality of life and greater satisfaction with the Military lifestyle.

Our Training Methods – On-Site, Online, On Target!

As pioneers of an Internet-based industry we are firm believers in the effectiveness of the Net and other technology in business communications. However, as experienced trainers/educators we also know that when it comes to teaching “soft skills” these tools alone cannot take the place of a traditional, face-to-face learning environment.

For optimum results, the Portable Career & Virtual Assisting Training Program for Military Spouses™ is presented in phases—using a combination of **on-site training** and **online support**. The former draws out knowledge and promotes thinking; the latter puts in knowledge and promotes growth.

Launching a Virtual Assisting practice is a process that requires dynamic thinking and action. Our **on-site workshops** provide a learning environment that encourages the kind of interaction, insight, and free-flowing creativity that inspires participants to make their vision a reality.

Following the on-site workshops, each graduate receives sustained **online support** at the Staffcentrix Portal for MSVAs – an Internet-based community of colleagues and experts – for as long as he or she remains an “active-duty spouse.” The information and continuous communication available to MSVAs at our site promotes awareness and knowledge that helps them further develop the skills that will help them succeed.

This comprehensive program is designed to meet several essential needs:

1. Professional training for the spouse on how to launch and grow the MSVA business;
2. Sustained post-training support through the Staffcentrix Internet portal for MSVAs—an interactive, “cross-fertilizing” forum for the exchange of growth tips and resources, and the formation of alliances critical to their success;
3. Prepare the service member spouse for the types of changes which may occur as a result of the civilian spouse undertaking a home-based career;
4. Enable the participating branches and bases to gather detailed data regarding the feasibility and impact of Internet-based portable careers for the military spouse.

Phases of the Training Program

The Application/Screening Process

Our goal is to create “success stories” among Military Spouses—not contribute to what may already be a long list of perceived career “failures”. Therefore, the selection of participants is a critical component in this, or any training program, designed to encourage self-employment.

At the center of the participant selection process is an online application designed to provide an accurate and uniform method of gathering information and scoring candidate responses. This simple, yet thorough tool, allows family center personnel to review the applications quickly and select those exhibiting the strongest evidence of likely success in the training program and in their own virtual businesses thereafter.

Phase I:

‘Realities & Readiness’ Workshop: Exploring Entrepreneurship & Self-Employment

Duration: 6.5 hours

We understand the excitement and importance of transitioning into self-employment but are equally aware that not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur. In this workshop, participants are introduced to the challenges and rewards of home-based entrepreneurship and self-employment. A series of discussions, exercises and self-assessments will help participants evaluate their entrepreneurial profile and readiness before moving to launch a MSVA business.

Phase II:

Family Workshop: “Spouse with a Mouse” – *Anticipating Changes in the Household*

Attendees: Military Spouses AND Service Members

Duration: 2 hours

Business ownership can sometimes be more demanding than the entrepreneur — or his/her spouse — imagined. New responsibilities, client demands, and the requirements of consistent professionalism all require time, focus, and energy. The family schedule changes, the entrepreneur (who, before, was always “there”) is suddenly unavailable or preoccupied, and the “ups and downs” inherent in every business reverberate through the family unit.

The chances of success in a home-based business are dramatically strengthened when the entrepreneur has the emotional support and understanding of his/her spouse. Time commitments, marketing expenses, and the occasional outlay for new hardware or software will make sense to a spouse who has been briefed on what to expect, and will help the new entrepreneur avoid the criticism and antagonism that may arise during the ramp-up period, before the business can be expected to turn a profit.

This Workshop helps couples develop reasonable expectations and goals for the new environment, so they can sustain a healthy relationship while meeting the challenges of growing a business.

Phase III:

‘Launching & Marketing Your Virtual Service Practice’ Workshop

Duration: 6.5 hours

This Workshop is designed to take participants through the first stages of building a solid client base that will support their practice over the coming years. Topics covered include defining the “ideal” client, how to interview prospective clients, effective communication in “virtual” work relationships, an exploration of various marketing approaches and vehicles, and more. Additionally, participants will begin writing a comprehensive marketing plan that will help them implement a focused, strategic marketing campaign.

Phase IV:

Sustained Internet-Based Support

Duration: As long as the participant is an “active-duty spouse”

The Staffcentrix Portal (www.msvas.com) provides a joint-branch community environment designed to foster business development, high professional standards and an entrepreneurial culture. In addition to its comprehensive content and networking tools, the site provides online mentoring and “real-time” Q&A, and includes an RFP (request for proposal) service to generate client leads for the MSVA.

Participants Are Talking...

“...I feel I have learned so much from the two of you as well as meeting other military spouses who I will be networking with. This is just what I had been looking for.”

“This was a wonderful experience for me. I can’t wait to begin this business. Thank you for these opportunities that will be opening for me.”

“This was wonderful. I have always wanted to do something in this arena and never quite knew how to go about it. I hope to be one of your stars and help rocket this industry into the forefront of military spouses careers.”

“I learned so much from networking with the other spouses and being trained by the gurus of the industry. My husband really enjoyed the ‘spouse with a mouse’ workshop and it was good for him to hear about the realities of a home-based business from a third party.”

“This was a fantastic program for military spouses. It really meets the needs and criteria for people who are not typical job seekers.”

What Sets Us Apart? Experience & Expertise

Co-founded by the founder of the **Virtual Assisting industry** and an ex-Wall Street attorney (and service disabled vet), Staffcentrix combines the experience of its management to provide Military Spouses with the training, mentoring, support and expertise required to launch Virtual Assisting practices. Since launching in May 1999, Staffcentrix has **helped over 2,100 individuals in 35 countries around the world to plan, launch, develop and maintain their businesses.**

THE MSVA

The MSVA is self-employed.

The MSVA uses email, phone and fax to accept and deliver work.

The MSVA usually works for small-business clients who may be located anywhere.

The MSVA works from home and sets his/her own hours.

The MSVA has no work-related commute.

The MSVA can work with and/or around her children’s schedule to reduce or eliminate childcare costs.

The MSVA has clients who will PCS with him/her.

The MSVA’s business can thrive even in areas where isolation and poor economy are a factor.

The MSVA sets her/his own fees with most charging an average of \$25 per hour.

The MSVA has a career as opposed to a job.

Staffcentrix in the News - Articles, Appearances, Awards & Recognition

At Staffcentrix, one of our top priorities is to continuously gain high-profile exposure for the Virtual Assisting industry. With a young industry, ongoing -- and accurate -- media and market exposure is critical. At Staffcentrix, we know the importance of **educating the marketplace of prospective hirers for the Military Spouses we work with**. So we set ourselves the goal of continuous, high-level, effective communication with not only the media but major corporations, government agencies and international organizations worldwide.

Below you'll find some of the results of our efforts. If you've seen Virtual Assistance in the media lately or heard the term used, chances are that Staffcentrix is behind it!

Books Authored by Staffcentrix Founders -- Christine Durst & Michael Haaren...

"The Virtual Assistant's Pre-Launch Manual & Workbook" - Durst/Haaren

"The Virtual Assistant's Building Your Client Base and Marketing 101 Manual & Workbook" - Durst/Haaren

"Transform Your Business Using Virtual Assistants for Real Estate Professionals" - Durst/Haaren/Russer

In the Media...

Air Force Times

BusinessWeek

MicroTimes Magazine

The Independent Wife

Home Business Magazine

Guardian Unlimited (UK)

The Washington Times

La Nacion (Costa Rica)

British Telecom

Career Magazine

Army Times

FastCompany Magazine

Realtor Magazine®

Office.com

Newsday New York

The Straits Times (Singapore)

Staffing Industry Review

Women Today Online

Realty Times

The Newark Star-Ledger

Fortune Small Business

USA Today

US News and World Report

Entrepreneur Magazine

Air Force Link

The Times (London)

Internet.Works Magazine (UK)

XTRA (New Zealand)

The Baltimore Sun

The Morning Call

Inc. Magazine

The Washington Post

BankRate.com

Executary International

Christian Women Today

Christian Science Monitor

The Weekend Australian

Puget Sound Business Journal

JobMonthly.com

Mil. Spouses' Career Network

On the Radio...

Voice of America

Disability Radio Worldwide

Living Life More Entrepreneurially

CNET Radio

At the Podium...

2003 Department of Defense Spouse Employment Conference - *Portable & Virtual Careers for Military Spouses*

The United Nations - *Presentation to the Division for Social Policy and Development*

2001 National Association of REALTORS Conference - *Panel Experts & Introduction of Military Spouse VAs to Real Estate Pros*

US Small Business Administration - *Experts for SBA Blue Ribbon Roundtables in 2000, 2001*

Chase Manhattan Bank - *Presentation on "Addressing the Needs of the Changing Workplace Through Virtual Assistants"*

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities - *Presentation: Virtual Careers for Disabled Veterans*

Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities - *Entrepreneurship options for people with disabilities*

Microsoft Corporation - *Invited to become one of the original twenty companies in the Microsoft-founded Able to Work Consortium*

Awards, Nominations, Recognition...

Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year® Award - *Nominees - 2000, 2001*

Working Woman Entrepreneurial Excellence Awards - *Finalist 2000, Nominee 2001*

Chase Manhattan Bank "Working Woman of the Month" - *October 2000*

2001 Outsourcing World Achievement Award (Sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers) - *Nominated 2001, 2002*

200 FastCompany "Fast 50" Award - *Nominated*

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Christine C. Durst, Chief Operating Officer

Staffcentrix, LLC.

175 Center Road

Woodstock, CT 06281 USA

Phone: 1.860.974.3521

Email: CDurst@Staffcentrix.com