

Rescue Desk Provides Reliable, Comprehensive Support for MarketingSavant *Entrepreneur Finds Perfect Fit with Virtual Assistant*

Entrepreneurs face a multitude of unknowns when launching a new venture. Early decisions during the bootstrapping phase can have a huge impact on the future success of the business. The ongoing process of evaluating trade-offs and fine-tuning strategies can feel like playing the lottery on a daily basis.

When entrepreneur Dana VanDen Heuvel went through this process, he was lucky enough to secure a winning ticket. His firm, MarketingSavant Group, helps clients leverage thought leadership and social media marketing through precise strategy development and targeted user-centric research. VanDen Heuvel travels often, fulfilling frequent speaking and training engagements.

As he embarked upon this venture, the seasoned solo-preneur reviewed his project plan realistically. "You see your name next to every task on the list," VanDen Heuvel reflects. "That's not practical. You need to focus on the core of the business, on what your talents are."

Success Requires Business Focus

Enter Rescue Desk, LLC, a virtual assistance firm that is VanDen Heuvel's winning ticket. Via a monthly retainer agreement, he offloads numerous tasks to his virtual assistant (VA). "Having this virtual talent is the best way to grow beyond yourself and really focus on the things that you should be focusing on," VanDen Heuvel observes. "It is a sure stepping stone to entrepreneurial success."

Rescue Desk is part executive assistant, marketing assistant, project manager, and creative coordinator – combined into one efficient package. As virtual professionals, VAs work from their own offices, providing an attractive

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alternative to the cost and commitment of hiring on-site staff. VAs can take time-consuming support tasks and projects off the to-do list, freeing small business owners, solo entrepreneurs, and busy executives to maintain and grow their businesses.

Continuity and Communication are Key

VanDen Heuvel knew from the start of his MarketingSavant venture that he would need to offload some support tasks. "There are many things for which I simply am not a value-adding resource," he notes dryly. Initially, he leveraged Elance, a web service which connects businesses with independent contractors, for individual projects. While this accomplished the goal of offloading the occasional project, VanDen Heuvel found that the communication burden of working with a new resource each time was self-defeating. "There was no continuity," he recalls.

VanDen Heuvel knew there had to be a better way. He wished to avoid the costs and administrative overhead involved in hiring an employee, yet he needed to establish an ongoing relationship with a reliable support resource. After contracting with two different offshore firms in India that supply virtual-assistant support services, and struggling through language as well as time-zone barriers, VanDen Heuvel concluded that the overseas arrangement was useful for rote and routine tasks, but fell short of the comprehensive support arrangement he sought.

Service is Superb

A timely recommendation to hire a VA resonated with this solo-preneur. VanDen Heuvel sought a VA located closer to his Green Bay, Wisconsin headquarters and soon discovered Rescue Desk, which is based 150 miles away in Madison. Suddenly, everything fell into place.

On an ongoing basis, Rescue Desk manages his calendar, responds to web site inquiries, handles paperwork for speaking engagements, and performs various copy editing, design, and research tasks. Additionally, he relies on Rescue Desk to assist with special projects, such as conferences or marketing campaigns, on an as-needed basis. "Rescue Desk handles everything superbly," VanDen Heuvel relates.

When considering how these many tasks were accomplished prior to retaining Rescue Desk, or how they would they get done without a VA, VanDen Heuvel quips, "They didn't, and they wouldn't." While the working relationship is a virtual one, VanDen Heuvel appreciates the occasional opportunity to meet in person. As an added bonus, if he requires on-site assistance with an event or conference, his VA is able to accommodate.

Virtual Assistance to the Rescue

"MarketingSavant Group is the perfect candidate for virtual assistance," says Rachel Rasmussen, founder of Rescue Desk. "We specialize in helping entrepreneurs, executives, and independent service professionals focus on what they do best. They can leave the rest to us."

Rasmussen is accustomed to being introduced to a project or business at crisis point. "Busy entrepreneurs and executives often wait until they reach critical mass before they acknowledge that there is too much on their plate," Rasmussen relates. "It's human nature. But once new clients realize what a VA can do for them, they wonder why they waited so long to hire one."

Unquestionable Return

Rescue Desk clients quickly discover that they can avoid the next crisis point altogether. They also realize that freeing time to focus on core business activities is critical to furthering their success. "The value Rescue Desk

brings is worth double or triple what it costs me every year. No question," asserts VanDen Heuvel.

Rescue Desk services are tailored to a client's needs. Many clients, including VanDen Heuvel, rely on Rescue Desk as they would an executive assistant. Support tasks such as scheduling and confirming appointments, managing mailings and paperwork, responding to inquiries,

etc. are handled seamlessly by the VA. Rescue Desk clients also seek project management assistance – for example, working with or researching third-party vendors, or planning events and meetings. In addition, Rescue Desk handles writing, editing, and desktop publishing projects for clients, spanning print as well as web publishing.

The Rescue Desk business model is very flexible. Most clients hire Rescue Desk on retainer for regular, ongoing assistance, which allows Rescue Desk to get involved in the clients' day-to-day operations. However, occasional, per-project support is also available during busy business cycles or when special projects need attention. Fees are on a sliding scale, depending upon the project or size of the retainer.

Secret to Success

The implicit trust that underlies VanDen Heuvel's relationship with Rescue Desk was conspicuously absent in his prior support-outsourcing experiences. He notes that response time to queries and meeting requests reflects directly on him. "I can trust Rachel to be the face of my brand," he relates. "She sometimes reflects better on my business than I do!"

VanDen Heuvel attributes much of the success of his arrangement with Rescue Desk to the entrepreneurial nature of its founder. Because she is a small business owner herself, Rasmussen understands what it takes to succeed. She employs the same responsible approach to nurturing his business as she does to her own. This is in sharp contrast to the job-shop

mindset of the large offshore firm employees with whom he worked previously.

"She gets it," VanDen Heuvel says. "Rachel is an entrepreneur herself. She instinctively knows that the impression you give to the outside world is

a constant reflection on the business itself. It's not an employee mentality. It's much more of a partnership – because a partner has a vested interest in their own success, which is tied to yours. That's why it works so well."

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Cost-Effective and Efficient

Rescue Desk offers skilled, focused, professional support and assistance to busy professionals, cost-effectively and efficiently, no matter where they are located. Various tools for real-time communication, collaboration, and information transfer, as well as regular conference calls and progress reports, keep everyone in sync. Once tasks are delegated, Rasmussen can be counted on to ask focused questions and then take the initiative, using her own resources, to get the job done.

"Rescue Desk allows me to run a business that is virtual at the core – I can go anywhere, run my business from any place. It suits my business needs perfectly," VanDen Heuvel reflects. "Retaining Rescue Desk has been one of the best business decisions I have made."

For more information on Rescue Desk, or to explore putting a virtual assistant to work in your business, please contact Rescue Desk, LLC:

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