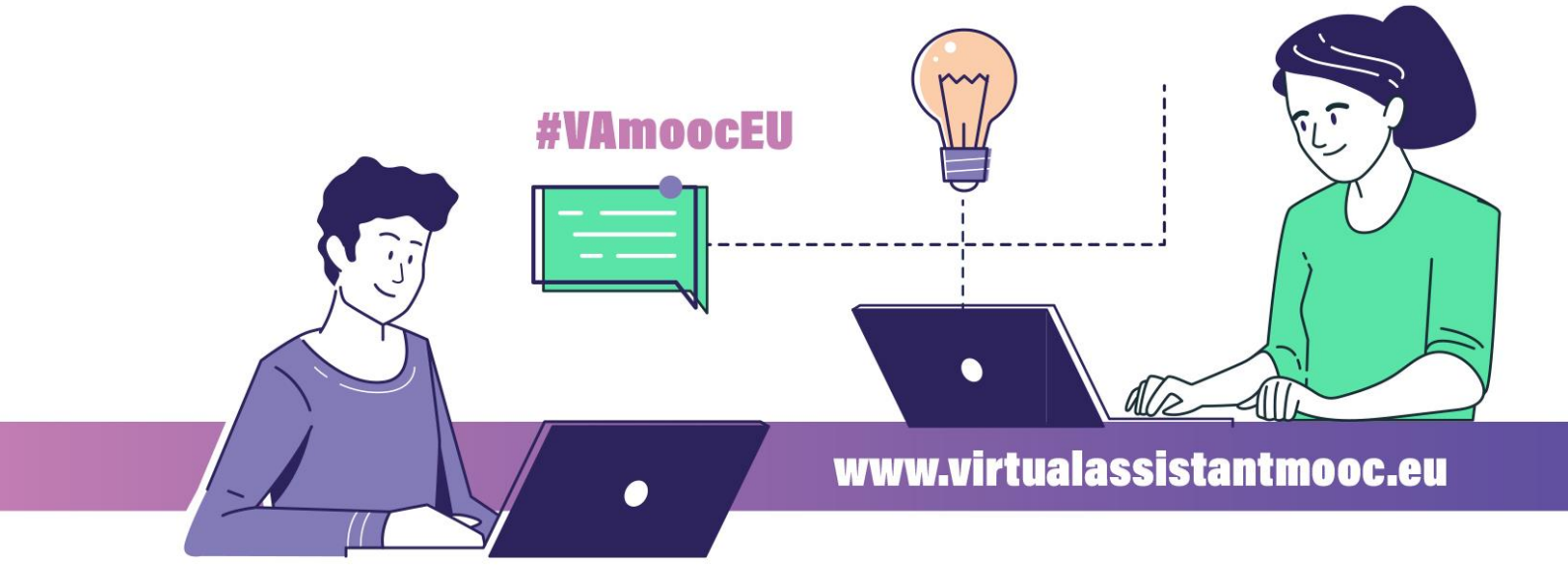
VA MOOC

THE VIRTUAL ASSISTANT'S MOOC

Learners' workbook



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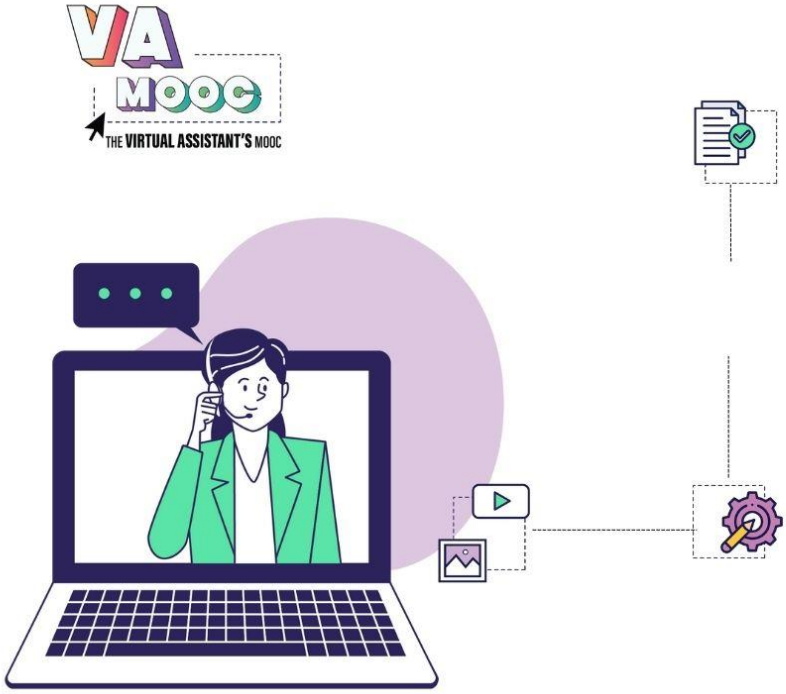
INTRODUCTION

This workbook gathers content from the first module of the chatbot created in project The Virtual Assistant's MOOC. It covers the skills that all virtual assistants should master, regardless of the services they offer, namely:

- How to become a virtual assistant,
- Promoting yourself,
- Starting your company,
- Remote work organisation,
- Greener work practices.

You can find all the link to the MOOC and chatbot on the website of the project: **https://virtualassistantmooc.eu/**



Step 1: Becoming a Virtual Assistant

1. Starting as a virtual assistant

Let's start with the basics. What do you know about your job as a virtual assistant (VA)?

Select the correct answer(s) among the following sentences:

1. Which is (are) correct?
    A. You have to register as an entrepreneur
    B. It is better to steal ideas from other VAs
    C. You should follow other VAs online

2. Which is (are) correct?
    A. It is better to make a list of the services you offer before you start
    B. You can create your own website
    C. Hacking into another website can prove you are better than other VAs

3. Which is (are) correct?
    A. Since you are just starting, your work is not that valuable
    B. Overconfidence is the key when starting a new job!
    C. Some VAs like to share their experience, ask them for help!

2. Building your portfolio

True or false? Answer those questions to learn how to create the perfect portfolio!

Choose the right answer for each of the following sentences:

1. Your portfolio should contain personal information **True/False**
2. You may show your awards on a portfolio **True/False**
3. A portfolio is personal, never show it to others **True/False**
4. Your price sheet can appear on your portfolio **True/False**

5. There is only one universal template for a portfolio **True/False**

6. A portfolio can be messy **True/False**

7. A portfolio can contain feedback from your clients **True/False**

8. A portfolio is only useful at the beginning of your career **True/False**

9. A portfolio is a way for you to boast about your awards **True/False**

10. A portfolio should advertise for you **True/False**

3. Getting your first clients

Getting your first clients is a scary task for beginner VAs. Choose the best option for each of the following sentences!

Select the right answer for each of the following sentences:

1. On social media...
    A. I only post about my work.
    B. I can share memes, pictures of cats and controversial takes.

2. In order to create your network, you can:
    A. Randomly select a few services you can offer every day.
    B. Create a brand for your business.

3. It looks like many people are looking for the same thing... How do you react?
    A. I adapt to the market to offer them what they need.
    B. I need to be unique, I do not consider the market to be relevant.

4. Finding inspiration

Many younger VAs may look up to you and your professional experience. What pieces of advice would you give to someone who is just getting started? Think both in terms of legal advice and kindness!

Circle the right answer for each of the following sentences:

1. I have never created a website! What is it supposed to look like?

    A. Have you never seen a website before?

    B. You can search for other VAs and get some inspiration from their website! Think about your brand and style!

2. I am afraid no one is going to check my website.

    A. It means your services are bad!

    B. Besides your website, you can also create your profile on popular platforms.

3. How should I improve my services later on?

    A. You can always get some inspiration or even advice from other VAs.

    B. Be creative!

4. What if I use an idea I saw somewhere else?

    A. It's not always necessary to invent brand new things. What already exists is probably in demand. Sometimes a little twist is enough!

    B. It’s stealing!

5. Ahh, I am not creative enough.

    A. Many people struggle with finding a unique idea. Don't give up: get inspired!

    B. Then you should choose another carrier path.

STEP 2: PROMOTING YOURSELF

1. Self-promotion

Self-promoting is difficult for some people, especially those who are not self-confident! However, the most difficult part is to get started. Let's see how you could help people who self-doubt.

Select the most appropriate answer for each of these sentences:

1. I am not talented enough.
    A. You should work voluntarily for the first five years to have enough experience.
    B. Think about your satisfied customers; you are talented!

2. I feel I need more experience.
    A. Trust yourself; experience comes with time. You can start your journey with 3-5 workpieces to put into your portfolio.
    B. Let's go back to school and get five more certificates!

3. I am too shy to talk about myself.
    A. No worries, networking is not important at all.
    B. Sometimes it is worth getting out of your comfort zone. Practice will help you to improve your skills. So figure out what you want to say and practice it with your family and friends.

4. I don't want to annoy people with a lot of messages.
    A. Remember, less is often more! You don't have to post daily content; it is enough to share content 1-2 times a week.
    B. Other people's opinion is not a priority.

5. I don't know how I want to communicate my 'brand' yet.
    A. It is not essential to have a brand.

B. It is better to communicate regularly, even if you need a clearer vision of the details of your brand.

2. Social media

Every social media has various upsides to offer. Make sure to know the codes of the networks you communicate on, or you may miss your mark!
*At the time of writing, Twitter has just rebranded to X. Some of the expected answers may also change names in the future, and new social networks may appear.
Write down the name of the social media platform that best fits each description:

A. _____ is a mainstream social media platform that doesn't require advanced technical skills; mostly, you post text content, sometimes pictures or videos.

B. If you are wondering where you can find more professionals content from your field, _____ is your place. Here you can network easily, and you also can share professional content and your previous works.

C. On _____ , you can mainly share visual content. It requires a lot of attention from your side because you have to post and answer the comments quite often.

D. _____ does require some time from you since you are supposed to post and keep yourself updated day by day, but you don't need advanced IT skills because, just as on Facebook, the content is mainly text.

E. Maybe it seems easy-peasy, but you need advanced IT skills to use _____ at a professional level; at least you are supposed to know something about video shooting and video editing.

F. If you are planning to share short, personal and funny video content _____ is your place!

G. If you are planning to target the youth, then besides TikTok, _____ would be your best friend. Here you can share short, funny and cool content to engage youngsters.

3. Networking

Networking is the hardest part of this job: you need to stay in touch with so many people! This task also forces you to advertise for yourself, be aware of the latest news in your fields, constantly look for new faces… What would you say about the following statements?

Are the following sentences true or false?

1. If you are at a networking event, remember it is always better to talk with fewer people but have real, meaningful conversations than to reach out to as many people as possible without a purpose. **True/False**

2. Don't listen to others. This is not their business to give you valuable advice. **True/False**

3. Meet and keep in touch with as many people as possible simultaneously. **True/False**

4. Don't hesitate to ask for contacts. There's a good chance that someone knows your next client! **True/False**

5. Take time to write simple but personal messages. If your message looks like a copy/paste or a model, it is less likely to be answered. **True/False**

4. How to take care of your network

Attending networking events is not enough, you will need to stay in touch with the people you meet. How would you do that?

Tick the right answer to the following questions:

1. How do you contact your Network?

A. Email your whole network and client base at once.

B. Establish a list of 15-20 key contacts to keep in touch with.

C. Send emails randomly.

2. How often should you contact your network?

A. Contact people every day.

B. Contact key people every 6 months or so.

C. Contact everyone from your list only once

3. In order to advertise for yourself

A. Ask for a job or a contract immediately.

B. Offer to catch up

C. Don't offer anything; let them contact you when they want.

4. In order to extend your Network…

A. Ignore others' requests for contact.

B. Reply to those who contact you for networking.

C. You should do nothing; your Network is going to grow anyway

Step 3: Start your company

1. Entrepreneurship

An “entrepreneur”: that’s a nice word to hear, isn’t it? However, it is also often misused: do you really know what it means?

True or false? Circle the right answer for each question:

1. To be an entrepreneur means to start your own business. **True/False**
2. Being entrepreneurial is rather a way of thinking. **True/False**

3. To be an entrepreneur, you will need many transferable skills, such as business management, communication, technical, marketing, financial, and customer service skills. **True/False**

2. Entrepreneur skills

Professional skills are divided into three categories: soft skills, hard skills and transferable skills. As an entrepreneur, you will have to master them all!
What kind of skills do these sentences refer to? Circle the right one!

1. Skills that can be useful in a variety of occupations and disciplines, such as problem-solving, leadership, or critical thinking.

A. Soft skills
B. Hard skills
C. Transferable skills

2. Personal skills and attributes that enable someone to work effectively and harmoniously with other people, such as empathy, teamwork, or communicational skills.

A. Soft skills
B. Hard skills
C. Transferable skills

3. Specific skills, like data analytics or copywriting skills, enable someone to do their job successfully in certain areas.

A. Soft skills
B. Hard skills
C. Transferable skills

3. Becoming a better entrepreneur

How do you become a good (or a better) entrepreneur?

Write down what you think are the most important skills of an entrepreneur, and compare them to the MOOC.

Did your ideas match the ones from the MOOC? Which skills do you need to improve?

4. Networking 2.0

You do not have to only attend in-person networking events: keep in touch with your network online!

Circle the correct answer for each of the following questions:

1. Why is networking important?
    A. Because it keeps your knowledge updated, and you can extend your clients' pool.
    B. Because at the networking events there's always good food.

2. Should you attend both online and offline events?
    A. No, you should only build relationships in person.
    B. Of course, so you can easily fit the right one into your schedule.

3. Building an online presence is important.
    A. It's not appropriate to butt into other people's online conversations.
    B. Of course it is, make yourself known!

4. You can support others by sharing their content.
    A. Yes, you can! If you share the content of others, they will be more willing to share yours.
    B. It is enough to ask them to share your content.

5. Always ask for feedback.
    A. Yes, yes and yes! Receiving feedback to improve your business is very important.

B. It is not necessary to ask for feedback.

Step 4: Remote work

1. How to be efficient from home

When working from home, make sure to create a nice work environment and avoid distractions. Let's see what you know about remote work.

Circle the right answer to each question:

1. Can remote work be more efficient than office work?
    A. Yes, but it depends on the individual.
    B. A home office is always more effective.

2. In which case, do people usually work more daily? Remote or office work?
    A. People work more from the home office because it is harder to "plug out".
    B. People work more from the office.

3. Should I monitor my efficiency in the home office?
    A. Yes, in this way, you can identify the problems and find a solution.
    B. No, the home office is not different from office work.

2. The risks of remote work

Remote work can be tricky when there are many distractions around you. But that is not the only issue!

Write down the main risks of remote work, from the tasks you are working on to your overall career path.

Then, check out the MOOC or the Answer section!

3. Taking care of your work-life balance

When you are working from home, it can be difficult to distinguish whether you are at work or in your private life. Ask yourself the following questions as you answer them: maybe you are doing too much, and taking a break would certainly help your productivity and your morale!

Circle the answer to each of the following questions:

1. Is it harder for someone to unplug themselves from work in the home office?
    A. It is not hard at all.
    B. Yes, because they have constant access to work-related stuff, it is hard to avoid them and stop working.

2. Is it important to take a break?
    A. Yes, your brain needs some rest to stay effective.
    B. No, breaks are overrated.

3. Is constant overwork healthy?
    A. Yes, and it makes you more productive constantly.
    B. No way! Constant overwork can cause burnout! Try to avoid it!

4. Distractions at home

When working from home, distractions are everywhere! Make sure to identify them so that you can better avoid them!

True or false? Answer the following questions:

1. Working from home can be full of distractions. **True/False**
2. Having an office room, or at least a corner you can always work from is important. **True/False**

3. Better time management helps you avoid distractions. **True/False**

4. If you want to increase your motivation, reward yourself after each completed task. **True/False**

STEP 5: GREENER PRACTICES

1. Pollution from home

Even though you are working from home and therefore avoid all commute in the morning and in the evening, it does not mean that your environmental impact is non-existent. What exactly is your carbon footprint?

Circle the right answer to each of the following questions:

1. Global use of videos (streaming, video calls etc.) per year CO2 emissions.
    A. 3.000 tonnes
    B. 3 million tonnes
    C. 300 million tonnes

2. A "Thank you" email generates about...
    A. 0,1g CO2
    B. 1g CO2
    C. 10g CO2

3. Every year, datacentres (for cloud storage or website servers) generate about...
    A. 500Mt of CO2
    B. 900Mt of CO2
    C. 1,5Gt of CO2

2. How to reduce your impact

Although you cannot reduce your impact to zero grammes of CO2 a year when working as a virtual assistant, you can still take some actions to minimize your impact on the environment.

Circle the bad piece of advice in each of the following series of suggestions to improve your carbon footprint.

1. To reduce your carbon footprint, you can…
    A. Use second-hand devices
    B. Use a cloud to store your files
    C. Use VOC-free ink

2. Also, you should…
    A. Print your documents at home
    B. Delete old files from online platforms
    C. Use the video only when necessary

3. Finally, you can…
    A. Lower the brightness of your screen
    B. Prefer in-person events for large crowds
    C. Send text messages rather than emails

3. Building a green website

There are several options when it comes to reducing the carbon footprint of your website. Answer the following questions to discover what you can do to limit your environmental impact!

True or false? Circle the right answer to the following questions:

1. Having an optimized SEO will increase your carbon footprint. **True/False**
2. Having lazyload and lower-quality pictures is better for the environment. **True/False**
3. You can keep a page with all the previous news from your website. **True/False**

4. How to avoid greenwashing

Greenwashing is a word we often hear, although its meaning is not always fully understood. What exactly is it? Take the quiz!

Circle the right answer to the following questions:

1. What is greenwashing?
    A. The use of vague words that sound ecological
    B. Climate change used as a justification for violence
    C. A green font to mislead customers into buying your product

2. What can you do to avoid it?
    A. Provide data to back up your claim
    B. Plant a tree yourself to show your engagement
    C. Quote famous climate activists on your website

3. You can also…
    A. Give evidence of how you limit your CO2 emissions
    B. Compare your business to others'
    C. Advocate for your next green actions

Answers

Step 1: Becoming a VA

1. Starting as a VA

1. A and C
2. A and B
3. C

2. Building your portfolio

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. False
7. True
8. False
9. False
10. True

3. Getting your first clients

1. A
2. B
3. A

4. Finding inspiration

1. B
2. B
3. A
4. A
5. A

Step 2: Promoting yourself

1. Self-promotion

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. B

2. Social media

1. Facebook
2. LinkedIn
3. Instagram
4. Twitter (X)
5. YouTube
6. TikTok
7. Snapchat

3. Networking

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. True

4. How to take care of your network

1. B
2. B
3. B
4. B

Step 3: Start your company

1. Entrepreneurship

1. False
2. True
3. True

2. Entrepreneur skills

1. Transferable skills
2. Soft skills
3. Hard skills

3. Becoming a better entrepreneur

All answers are in the MOOC lesson.

4. Networking 2.0

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. A

Step 4: Remote work

1. How to be efficient from home

1. A
2. A
3. A

2. The risks of remote work

- Communication and collaboration
- Keep the work-life balance
- Distractions and lack of motivation
- Career advancement and growth

3. Taking care of your work-life balance

1. B
2. A
3. B

4. Distractions at home

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. True

Step 5: Greener practices

1. Pollution from home

1. C
2. B
3. B

2. How to reduce your impact

1. B
2. A
3. B

3. Building a green website

1. False
2. True
3. False

4. How to avoid greenwashing

1. A
2. A
3. A

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