



## Virtual Paralegal Newsletter Magazine™

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Volume 7, Date 7/18/10

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### Virtual Paralegal Interview

Your name: **Kris L. Canaday, Freelance Paralegal**

Your company's name & contact information: **ParalegalSvcs4Attys;**  
[kris.canaday@gmail.com](mailto:kris.canaday@gmail.com)

Practice areas: I focus on administrative law, intellectual property, and litigation but because I have training and/or experience in a wide range of practice areas, I do call upon that knowledge when asked.

Years in business: That is a trick question for me. I began freelancing in 1998 but had to give it up when I accepted a permanent employment position from one



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of my contracts. After relocating, I decided to return to freelancing and make it my permanent profession.

**Why did you start your virtual paralegal business?**

Actually, I work mostly as a freelance paralegal, so I am not always or necessarily virtual, although this aspect of my work is rapidly increasing. I originally started freelancing in 1998 to offset my limited income. Last year, I decided to return to freelancing and build a significant business with it because I saw a serious need for legal assistance in my local community. It's a small, somewhat economically depressed area and most attorneys are solo practitioners struggling to keep their practice above water. They are overwhelmed but don't have the overhead or profit margin to hire legal assistance. For the same reasons, there are no employment opportunities for me here. I realized that I could do more and help more attorneys by offering my services to all of them on an as-needed basis than I could by working for just one attorney in a traditional employment setting.

**How long did it take for you to get your first client?**

It took about a month to sign on my first client.

**How did you transition from your office paralegal job to your virtual paralegal business?**

When I first started in 1998, I worked my business in conjunction with my traditional employment; I did not intend it to become a full-time business. When I restarted last year, there was no transition; I was unemployed and in need of employment that was not available.

**How much do you charge for your services? (Just give us a range)**

In general, I bill by the hour. Because I work with attorneys in various geographical locations, I try to provide rates that are competitive for each respective area. The rate is based on several factors, including market rate, type of work, and complexity of the project. It generally falls between one-third and one-half the amount billed to the attorney's client. Even if it is less than my standard rate, I try to tailor my services so that outsourcing remains a cost-effective and value-driven decision for the attorney regardless of location, so long as it doesn't fall below my break-even point.



### **What type of software do you use for your practice areas?**

I utilize software for timekeeping, bookkeeping/invoicing, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentations, notebooks, pdfs, digital imaging, case management, web design, and online collaboration. I am also considering digital dictation as a way to transmit assignments.

### **How do you market your services?**

Because my first and foremost concern was my local attorneys, what marketing I have done has been more traditional. The only thing I've really done so far is to send letters and information to individual attorneys. I hand-deliver them and talk briefly with the attorney about what I do. My goal is to contact at least two attorneys each week. Interestingly, my non-marketing activities have yielded significant results. For example, I like to attend bar association meetings so I can get out of my office and network with people who have similar interests. As a result, the bar president sent an email to the local attorneys regarding my services and posted my contact information on the bar website. What has surprised me the most, though, was that the majority of my contacts have come from a letter and questionnaire I delivered to each attorney's mailbox at the courthouse in which I asked how I could best assist them. I received more requests for assistance from that mailing than I received return questionnaires.

To expand my research, I post my information on various job, bidding, and legal resource sites and have started networking online. I am also working to develop a new website.

### **What are the challenges or obstacles you have faced while starting and operating your virtual paralegal business?**

I think the biggest challenge was identifying the procedures and tools necessary for working virtually. In addition, there are so many options out there that it's hard to determine which ones is the best choice for this type of business.

### **What do you miss most about your office paralegal position that you do not have as a virtual paralegal?**

What I miss the most is the diverse interaction with colleagues, outside counsel, and clients or their attorneys.

### **What advice would you give to new virtual paralegals?**

Spend the time to do your homework and get setup before you start marketing: Have your business cards, letterhead, brochures, contract, and procedures prepared and ready to go. Also, know how you are going to offer and deliver your services.



**What do you think is currently lacking from the virtual paralegal industry?**

This coincides with what I found to be the biggest challenge in getting started: A central source of information on how to practice virtually and the tools and resources available for doing so. As such, I am working to develop a central source of information for virtual paralegals that will answer these questions and provide a list of the tools and resources that are available.

**How can the virtual paralegal training center help you grow your business?**

Well, to grow my business, I need to streamline my administrative processes so that I have more time. However, I think it would be wonderful to have a central location where information pertinent to the virtual paralegal profession is accessible -- trends, practices, opinions, groups, associations, regulations, etc. It looks like The Virtual Paralegal Training Center is already working toward that objective.

**Please feel free to add your bio if you would like to have it as a part of this interview.**

I was introduced to the legal field in 1996 and quickly fell in love. I have worked for several years since as a legal analyst/paralegal in both the public and private sectors. I also hold a paralegal certificate and bachelor's degree in both legal studies and psychology, all summa cum laude. I have experience and/or training in many areas of law and am able to quickly learn new areas of expertise.

**Virtual Paralegal Surveys**

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VPTC would like to offer you a 1 year listing on our [Virtual Paralegal Directory](#) **FREE** for completing our [Virtual Paralegal Surveys](#). If you are already a member of the [Virtual Paralegal Directory](#) your listing will be extended for an additional year.

The purpose of the surveys is to gather information about the virtual paralegal industry to help us to better serve you as our members and subscribers.

[Please click here to view the surveys](#)



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## Financing your Virtual Paralegal Business

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- The estimated startup costs for starting a virtual paralegal business ranges from \$2,000 - \$5,000.
- However, if you already have a computer with internet access and a cell phone you will reduce your start-up costs significantly.
- If you are going to start a full time business, it is recommended that you have at least 6 months to 1 year income saved before starting your virtual paralegal business.
- It is also highly recommended that you start out on a part-time basis while you gradually grow your business.

Financing your virtual paralegal business may include but are not limited to the following:

- Savings – You may use your savings to finance your virtual paralegal business but remember you may also need your savings to pay your bills until your business starts to turn a profit.
- Bank loans – you may check with your personal banker or the bank where you have your business account for information on the different types of small and home based business loans.
- Personal loans – you may consider asking friends or family for a personal loan. Be clear about the terms of paying back the loan. Keep in mind that your virtual paralegal business will be a start up and you may not see any profit for awhile; and if you have a full time business you may not have any other income to pay back the loan in a short period of time.
- Small Business Grants - The Small Business Administration has programs specifically designed to help with financing home based business.
- Partnership – you may consider a partnership with a silent partner where your partner invests all or part of the start up money and you manage the day to day operations of the business.



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- You may also consider a partnership with another virtual paralegal in or out of your practice areas.
- Visit [SBA.org](http://SBA.org) for more information on financing a small or home based business.

### **Virtual Paralegal Networking Forum** **Win \$25 just to participate**

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[Virtual Paralegal Networking Forum](#) – VPTC offers the first virtual paralegal networking forum where virtual paralegals and legal assistants can network and learn more about the virtual paralegal business. The virtual paralegal networking forum is **FREE** to join. [Click here to register](#)

### Virtual Paralegal Forum – Monthly Discussion

**Win \$25 just to participate**  
[Click here for more information](#)

July drawing will be on August 1, 2010. Winner will be announced in August 2010 Newsletter and on VPTC website.

### **Why is VPTC the industry #1 Virtual Paralegal Training Program?**

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The Virtual Paralegal Training Center (“VPTC”) eliminates the fluff. We do not include information that is not relevant to your training just to fill time. We are not vague. We get right to the point. We welcome and respect your honest feedback. We listen to you and improve our training accordingly on a regular basis. You tell us what you want and we do the research and get you the results in a timely manner. If you are considering starting or growing your virtual paralegal business VPTC should be your first choice.

A VPTC education combined with your years of experience working as a paralegal will be your best guidance in starting and operating your virtual paralegal business.

[Click here to Enroll](#)



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## VPTC News

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- [VPTC Membership](#)
- [Virtual Paralegal Surveys](#)
- [VPTC Virtual Paralegal Training](#)
- [VPTC Virtual Paralegal Certificate](#)
- [Attorney's Virtual Paralegal Guide - eBook](#)
- [Advertising Opportunities](#)
- [Post a Job](#)
- [VPTC Gears](#)

## Network with Other Virtual Paralegals

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- ✚ [The Virtual Paralegal Training Center](#) – The Virtual Paralegal Training Center ("VPTC") mission is to provide training and resources to paralegals and legal assistants with starting and operating their virtual paralegal business. [Click here](#) for a list of VPTC membership benefits.
- ✚ [Virtual Paralegal Networking Forum](#) – VPTC offers the first virtual paralegal networking forum where virtual paralegals and legal assistants can network and learn more about the virtual paralegal business. The virtual paralegal networking forum is **FREE** to join. [Click here to register](#)
- ✚ [Virtual Paralegal Blog](#)- VPTC discusses topics that are of interests to virtual paralegals with starting and growing their business. Topics include but are not limited to confidentiality, software, fees, marketing, conflicts of interests, and paralegal ethics among other things. [Click here to register](#)
- ✚ [Virtual Paralegal Directory](#) -VPTC offers an online directory where virtual paralegals can promote their business and services. [Click here to join](#)
- ✚ Join us on Facebook. [Click here to become a VPTC Facebook Fan.](#)



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- ✚ Follow VPTC on Twitter - [VirtPara](#)
- ✚ [Virtual Paralegal Training](#) - Click here to view the Virtual Paralegal Training Center Curriculum.

### **Virtual Paralegal Guest Posts, Tips & Articles**

The Virtual Paralegal Training Center is looking for guest posts, tips and articles relevant to the virtual paralegal business.  
For more information email us at [inbox@cdcvop.com](mailto:inbox@cdcvop.com)

## **Classifieds**

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### **[Join the Virtual Paralegal Training Center](#)**

[Click here](#) for a list of membership benefits from The Virtual Paralegal Training Center.

### **[Virtual Paralegal Directory](#)**

Advertise your Virtual Paralegal and Legal Assistant business on the Number One Virtual Paralegal Directory

### **[VPTC Advertising Rates.pdf](#)**

VPTC offer advertising opportunities for virtual paralegals and virtual assistants at very reasonable rates on our website and in our monthly Newsletter Magazine.

[Click here to view VPTC Advertising Rates.pdf](#)

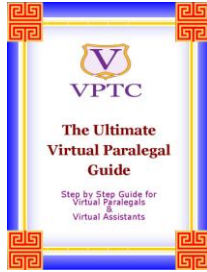
### **[Job Postings](#)**

VPTC accepts job posting geared towards virtual paralegals, legal assistants, virtual assistants, and virtual lawyers



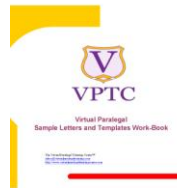
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### **The Ultimate Virtual Paralegal Guide - eBook**

Step by step guide to starting and operating a virtual paralegal and legal assistant business



### **Virtual Paralegal Sample Forms and Templates eWorkbook**

Sample forms and templates commonly used by virtual paralegals and legal assistants in their business

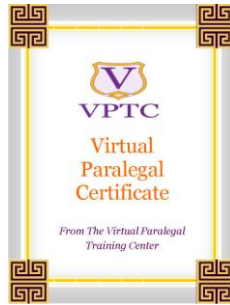


### **VPTC – Virtual Paralegal Training (online)**

At the completion of VPTC - Virtual Paralegal Training students will be able to apply their paralegal experience and education as they did in an office into the virtual world.

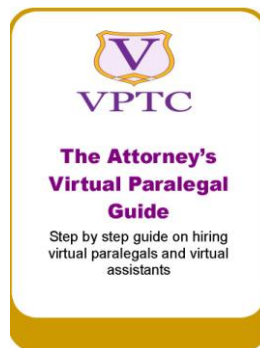


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### **VPTC Virtual Paralegal Certificate**

VPTC Virtual Paralegal Certificate is a 10 week program designed as personal training sessions to help you start and operate a “professional” virtual paralegal business.



### **Attorney's Virtual Paralegal Guide - eBook**

The Attorney's Virtual Paralegal Guide was written to address questions and concerns attorneys may have about hiring and working with virtual paralegals without breaking the law or violating their clients' privacy.

Advertising is available for virtual paralegals, legal assistants and virtual assistants in the Attorney's Virtual Paralegal Guide

[Click here for more information](#)



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