



## Virtual Assistant Firm Saves Money and Grows Business

### The Challenge: Difficulty Managing Clients and Projects Using Only Email

As a virtual assistant and sole proprietor of Virtual Strategies, Mary-Lou Ashton found that mainly using emails to organize her client information was inefficient and difficult to manage. She manually tracked tasks using Outlook calendar reminders but the process became very labor intensive. She wanted a central place where she could share information and manage projects.

Additionally, Mary-Lou was in the process of building a multi-VA business in which she would bring in additional virtual assistants to join her team. In order to properly manage her associates as well as her clients, she needed a centralized platform that could be used for both internal and external collaboration.

### The Solution: A Centralized Location for Sharing Information and Managing Projects

After evaluating a few other [online collaboration](#) solutions, Mary-Lou selected Central Desktop for its robust feature set and affordable price. She found Central Desktop to be easy to use and was able to get a workspace set up for her first client in an hour. With Central Desktop's ability to clone workspaces, she was able to add workspaces for additional clients quickly and efficiently.

The Central Desktop Files & Discussions and Tasks & Milestones features were used by Virtual Strategies most frequently to help manage client projects. Having all relevant project documents saved in one easily accessible location eliminated the need to constantly email files back and forth. Central Desktop also helped Mary-Lou better manage her company's operations. She used the "Request Update on this Task" feature to ensure that her associate VAs were staying on top of their project deadlines.

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*"Central Desktop has increased my productivity and decreased my non-billable time. I've been able to increase my income because I'm spending less time doing manual administrative tasks."*

*~ Mary-Lou Ashton, President*

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As a result of using Central Desktop, Mary-Lou was able to reduce the amount of non-billable time she spent doing manual administrative tasks. Instead, she was able to increase productivity and focus more on executing client projects. Mary-Lou estimated that each virtual assistant was able to save two hours per week by using Central Desktop, which results in a cost savings of more than \$5,000 per virtual assistant, per year.

**COMPANY**  
Virtual Strategies

**INDUSTRY**  
Virtual Assistant

**HEADQUARTERS**  
Powell River, BC, Canada

**WEBSITE**  
[www.vatp.ca](http://www.vatp.ca)

#### ABOUT The Contract Centre

Founded by Mary-Lou Ashton in 1997, Virtual Strategies provides remote administrative and strategic business services for busy entrepreneurs. Virtual Strategies specializes in organizing information, marketing and the creation and implementation of administrative procedures and business technology.