

Small Business News & Notes

The Virtual Office: Gateway To Growth

(NAPSA)—For entrepreneurs and small-business owners, image is everything and finding a way to establish the image that your business needs to thrive and grow doesn't have to be an expensive proposition.

Traditionally, start-up firms have had two choices when deciding where to "set up shop": turn a spare bedroom at home into an office or lease commercial office space.

Unfortunately, neither option presents a particularly attractive business case. Although convenient and cost effective, the home office can be wrought with distractions, such as kids and pets, and is not the most conducive place to host important client meetings. And leasing commercial space can be expensive and oftentimes risky.

For years, many small businesses have wrestled with these challenges. Many are surprised to find that there is another way.

For small businesses that want to limit their start-up costs and cost effectively grow their business, a virtual office can be the ideal solution.

For a fraction of the cost required to set up and maintain a full-time office, small-business owners can use virtual offices to create a more professional image, enhance productivity and offer service in new markets.

Essentially, a virtual office acts as an extension of the business' physical presence.

While you continue to work at home or your current office, a receptionist at the "virtual" loca-



A virtual office can provide you with a set amount of monthly office time to conduct business or host meetings in a professional, fully furnished corporate setting.

tion handles incoming calls and receives and forwards mail.

A virtual office gives you a prestigious business address and local phone number, which can make a positive impression on potential clients. For example, the Regus Group, the world's largest provider of workplace solutions, boasts a worldwide network of more than 1,000 business centers in 450 cities worldwide. All the centers are located in first-class office buildings, and you could establish a virtual office at any of them.

Virtual offices can also be used as a tool to test and enter new markets. If a market is not as successful as initially planned, the investment and risk exposure are minimal. If the market is successful, the business has gained an immediate presence in a viable market. With no long-term contracts, small firms can be more agile in the marketplace.

For information on small-business workplace resources, visit www.regus.com.