

Lilach in running for national award

A Hertfordshire businesswoman has been shortlisted in a hunt for the UK's most outstanding virtual assistant of 2007.

This is the first national awards scheme of its kind, aimed at boosting awareness of the rapidly growing profession of virtual assistance, and Lilach Bullock - Managing Director of asklilach Limited, of Hemel Hempstead, is one of 9 in the running for the accolade.

VAs support businesses or individuals in a personal assistant's role, but from their own premises. It is already an established profession in America, but was virtually unheard of in the UK until a few years ago.

Carmen MacDougall, of Midlands-based CMA Coaching and Training, launched the ambitious search after creating a support network and training resource for such assistants across the UK and Europe.

It is hoped the awards scheme will promote a wider understanding of the fledgling industry and the International Association of Virtual Assistants and the Institute of Qualified Professional Secretaries are backing the initiative as sponsors and judges.

Lilach will attend an awards ceremony on Saturday, April 21 in Milton Keynes where the winners of two categories will be announced.

The two awards up for grabs focus on VAs in their first 18 months, and more established practitioners of 18 months and over. Lilach is eligible for the first category, having set up her VA business in August 2006.

Lilach started working as a VA to balance a career with family commitments.

In less than a year she has built up a successful company with an ever growing client base and has never looked back.

Lilach said: “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of building my own business, using my skills as a PA but being my own boss. The recognition of being shortlisted for a national award is a wonderful bonus.”

Winners’ prizes include a PR campaign for their business, courtesy of Staffordshire-based Passionate Media (www.passionatemedia.co.uk), a professionally designed winner’s logo, a marketing consultation, a three month VA coaching programme courtesy of CMA Coaching and Training, free IQPS and IAVA membership for a year, a Fujitsu Photo Scanner and a winner's certificate.

Carmen MacDougall said: “Managers of both small businesses and larger organisations have started to recognise the benefits of the VA, and numbers have soared recently with an estimated 20,000 VAs now working in the UK and Europe. But I wanted more universal recognition of the valuable work they do.

“There are opportunities for personal assistants to be rewarded in award-schemes, it seemed only right that VAs should be given the same incentive.”

The event will also support children’s charity, Promise Dreams, where a raffle will raise vital funds for the cause that helps grant the wishes of children with life-limiting illnesses.

More information about becoming a VA, the awards scheme, or the April event is available at www.cmacoaching.com or by phoning Carmen MacDougall on 01785 224 577 or **contact asklilach**.

For more information on asklilach Limited you can contact Lilach on 01442 231663.