



# ADMINaholics

## What an **ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER** can do for your business

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR  
HIGHER PROFITS • MORE CLIENTS • BUSINESS GROWTH

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## What you can expect from this report

You know the power of outsourcing and how much better business can be when you're focused on profit building tasks. This report is not going to waste your time rehashing those details. Instead, you'll be getting a complete introduction to what an online business manager (OBM) can do for you – much more than a virtual assistant – and how to find an OBM that's right for you.

This report will provide you with the steps you need to take and the tools you need to have to ensure you get the most return on your investment.

## Here's what the report covers

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*If you're ready, let's get started...*

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## Online Business Manager (OBM) vs Virtual Assistant (VA)

Although similar in nature, there are some key differences between virtual assistants and online business managers. Understanding these differences will help you determine which person is right for your business.

On average, virtual assistants have 5-10 clients that they juggle work for on a regular basis. They are responsible for completing individual tasks assigned to them. Online business managers typically have no more than 3 clients and are responsible for keeping the business running smoothly.

Let's take a closer look...

	Online Business Manager	Virtual Assistant
<b>The big picture</b>	Understands the big picture and works with the business owner to outline & oversee the steps necessary to get there.	Typically aren't concerned about the big picture; instead they focus on doing the tasks.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Responsible for ensuring the business runs smoothly, by creating operation manuals, training assistants, managing assignments, schedules and staff.	Responsible for completing tasks assigned to them - i.e.: formatting ebooks, conducting research, sending newsletters, working in shopping carts.
<b>Achieving success</b>	Success is achieved when the business is operating efficiently & the entire team is happy.	Success is achieved when the work is completed & delivered in a timely manner
<b>Overall goal</b>	To build long-term, trusting relationships with business owners who value the working relationship and compensate accordingly.	To increase their work hours, thus income, for each client without having the added responsibility of managing others.
<b>Why hire...</b>	OBM's are hired when business owners have grown beyond the startup phase. They simply cannot manage everything and still continue to grow; or perhaps, they've grown tired of managing the day-to-day operations.	VA's are typically hired during the early stages of business. They help set up websites & shopping carts, create mailing lists, and so forth. Once the business is going, they continue to work on individual tasks.

As you can see, the role of an Online Business Manager is much different than a Virtual Assistant and yet, you can clearly benefit from hiring both.



## What you get when you hire an Online Business Manager

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### More time

#### *Who doesn't need more time?*

The main goal of an online business manager is to free up your time so you can work on the things that only you can do. When you step away from the day-to-day operations and release yourself from having to oversee every piece of every project, you will have the time and energy to focus on business growth projects.



These projects might include creating a better connection with your customers and subscribers, building strategic alliances within the industry, expanding your reach and getting your brand to new markets and planning for future growth. While you are working on these growth projects, the OBM is handling everything else.

### A trusted partner

#### *Essential to the relationship*

Online business managers truly care about their client's businesses. They understand the overall business vision, are excited by the things to come, thrive on the day-to-day operations and strive to make the business succeed. They treat the client's business as if it were their own. In a sense, hiring a good OBM is like having a trusted partner invested in your business.

### A decision maker

#### *Making all the decisions is exhausting!*

Operating a successful business requires a lot of day-to-day decisions and oftentimes projects are delayed because business owners don't have time to handle them all. Fortunately, most decisions don't have to be made by the business owner. A good online business manager will be willing to make decisions on their client's behalf. This doesn't mean they will be making all of the decisions; however, after establishing a guideline with the client, they can certainly handle many issues that arise throughout the day.

### Completed projects

#### *A key component to bigger profits*

Aside from the business owner, the OBM is the workhorse of the business. They spend most of their time planning, organising, and managing the tools, resources and staff within the business. Their focus is on ensuring things are running smoothly; answering questions, dealing with unexpected issues in a timely manner, and keeping projects on track so that business goals are met. The seamless transition from one project to the next allows the business owner to stay focused and the business to grow.

## When to hire an OBM

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Knowing when to hire an OBM can be a challenge. Hiring one too soon may not provide enough work for them and may become a strain on your budget. Hiring too late can be disastrous if your business is already beginning to fail.

Here are a few signs that now may be the right time to hire an OBM.

- Organising and streamlining operations seem like a pipe dream.
- Your income has plateaued and you need help rising to the next level of success.
- You have a good team, but managing them is draining.
- You want to be the visionary not the worker bee.
- Incomplete projects are getting in the way of progress.
- A busy schedule forces you to decline opportunities.
- You're tired of being "in charge" of everything.

These are just a few things that signal it's time to change your business role. Because you are unique, your signals may vary from other business owners. As you consider hiring an OBM, remember that shifting from the worker bee to the queen bee mindset is the quickest way to make positive changes for you and your business.

## Defining your needs

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Hiring the right OBM is vital to a strong, healthy working relationship. You simply cannot afford to pick the first person you meet and assume they're the right person for the job. The first step in finding the right OBM is defining your needs.

This includes:

- Hiring for where you're headed, not where you currently are
- Ensuring you have measures of success in place
- Knowing what to outsource & what needs your personal attention
- Knowing who to hire for each aspect of the business (tech, marketing, etc)
- Setting & clearly communicating your expectations for your support team Let's take a closer look....

### Your vision

Having a clear picture of where you want your business to be in 6 months, 1 year or even longer is vital to succeeding. Once you have your goals laid out, you and your OBM can discuss how to get there. At this point, you have measurable goals that your team can work towards and that you can monitor to ensure they're being met.

If you get stuck on your long-term goals, you might want to consider hiring a mentor or coach to help you over this hump before you proceed with hiring your OBM. While your OBM may be talented, they aren't mind readers and they certainly should not be making these important decisions for you or your business.

### Measurable goals

While one of your long-term goals may be to earn 6 figures by the end of next year, you'll want to have smaller measures of success in place to ensure you're staying on track. These smaller goals may be things like having a new shopping system fully functioning in 2 months, gaining 50 new affiliates by month 3, completing 5 guest blogging opportunities over the course of 6 months.

By having these smaller goals in place, the overall goal doesn't seem so daunting. In addition, it allows you to monitor and measure how things are going so you and your OBM to quickly address any problems that may arise and find a solution to keep you on the path of success.

Now that you have your long-term and short-term goals defined, you will be able to see which projects you can outsource and which you will be responsible for.

## What to outsource

As mentioned before, the projects you should be focused on are things that only you can do, such as; creating a better connection with your customers and subscribers, building strategic alliances within your industry, expanding your reach to get your brand to new markets and planning for future growth. While you are working these growth projects, your OBM and other staff can handle the rest.

## Your team

At this point, it's time to hire your team. If you have worked with contractors in the past, this may be pretty simple. If not, you might want to focus on hiring your OBM first, and let them handle locating & hiring the rest of the team.

This doesn't mean you have to have a full team on contracted standby at all times. Depending on your business needs your team may consist of your OBM, a virtual assistant and perhaps a writer or tech person. If you only need graphics occasionally, you can have the names of reliable designers on hand for when you need them.

To get the best service possible, you need to hire the right people for the job. If you need book covers or website images created, hire a graphic designer. If you need scripts installed, hire a tech person. Your OBM or VA may be able to do these; however, oftentimes they aren't as skilled as someone who specialises in a particular area. In addition, it may take them longer to do the work, essentially costing you as much or more than going to the right person the first time.

## Communication

To ensure work is completed in a timely manner and to your specifications, you must be a good communicator. Even if you just work with your OBM and they work directly with everyone else, you need to be able to explain exactly what you want. When they can clearly see your vision & what you want accomplished, they can quickly get to work.

Work with your OBM to create an operation manual for your business. This manual would outline how to handle customer support questions, sales, discounts and refunds. It would explain when you want to be directly involved with the decision making and when your OBM can take care of things.

It might outline what your preferred colors, design styles, website templates, writing styles, etc are so you don't have to explain it more than once. It can even include a predetermined amount of money that your OBM has permission to spend on outsourcing or other things without needing your approval. Once you have this manual created, your OBM will have the tools and information necessary to hire and train your staff.



## Finding an Online Business Manager

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As previously mentioned, you should not settle for the first OBM you meet, but instead find the right one for you. Here are some things to consider.

### Characteristics

What characteristics would you like to see in your OBM? Which are most important to you? Here are a few to get you started:

- **Forward thinker.** They see the whole picture & offer ideas to help you reach your goals.
- **Self-motivated.** They are go-getters. They don't wait until the last minute to start a project.
- **Takes initiative.** If they see something needs to be done, they do it.
- **Resourceful.** If they don't know an answer, they know how to find it
- **Organised.** Disorganisation leads to frustration and potential mistakes
- **Good communicator.** Good communication reduces confusion and errors
- **Professional.** They conduct themselves in a professional, self-confident way
- **Dependable.** They ensure work is completed as requested
- **Trustworthy.** If they cannot be trusted, the contract should be cancelled

You may not find someone who possesses every characteristic on your list, but if the most important ones are covered, you can work with the rest.

### Personality

While thinking about characteristics, you may want to take it a step farther and consider the type of personality it takes to do the job. For instance, if your OBM will be overseeing other staff members, they'll need to be a good team leader, be able to teach and have good follow up. Beyond that, based on your team members and customers, do you need them to be tough as nails or easy going? A timid OBM may not be right for the job if your team members need a firm hand and your customers are the pushy or cranky type.

The thing to remember is that you aren't looking for a mirror image of yourself, but someone who is easy to get along with and handles things in a similar way as you. While personality and characteristics may be difficult to determine when first contacting an OBM, as you start working together, keep these in mind while trying to determine if they are right for your business.

### Price

Online business manager rates vary considerably depending on their expertise and your budget. You can find both great and not-so-great OBMs across the payment scale so price does not always reflect how qualified they are.

That being said, if you hire an OBM who has been in business a while and is highly experienced or if you plan to have them oversee the majority of your operations, you should expect to pay a higher rate. You've gone to all the trouble of finding the perfect OBM for you so you won't want to lose them by not valuing their service.

### Ask questions

Unlike hiring an employee in a brick-and-mortar business, you do not have the opportunity for a face-to-face interview. Therefore, the only way to get a feel for the person is to ask questions.

Creating a list of questions or a pre-written questionnaire will help you in selecting the right OBM. Remember, they too want to ensure you are a good fit for their business; therefore, they may have a list of questions for you as well.

These questions are simply to make sure work ethics; communication styles, etc. meet each other's criteria. After all, if you want to touch base by phone on a daily basis and the OBM prefers email communication once a week, you probably won't be a good fit.

If you are unsure of what questions to ask, here is a list to get you started.

1. What are their hours of operation?
2. When would they be available to start?
3. How do they prefer to communicate?
4. How often do they check their email & reply?
5. Are they available by phone?
6. What time zone are they in?
7. Are they willing to do weekly or monthly planning meetings?
8. Will they need anything special from you? (software, training material, etc)
9. Do they have a list of contractors that they work with or is this something you need to provide?
10. What are their rates?
11. When and how do they invoice?
12. What type of payments do they accept?
13. Are they willing to sign a non-disclosure agreement?
14. Do they require a contract?
15. Do you have to commit to certain amount of time (6 months, 1 year, etc)
16. What do they like to see in a client/obm relationship?
17. What are their pet peeves when it comes to work?
18. Are there any tasks that they aren't comfortable doing?
19. Are there any holidays or blocks of time that they would be unavailable?

Whether your list is short or long does not matter. The important thing is that you get your questions answered.

### **Job descriptions**

Having a complete job description is important when hiring an OBM. It will save you time & frustration when considering potential candidates. It also clears the way for the OBM to quickly and easily transition into the new role.

## **Locating an OBM**

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While virtual assistants have been around for 20 years or more, online business managers are fairly new to the playing field. The best place to look for an OBM is in your own inner circle. Have you been working with a VA for a long time? Do you feel they would make a good OBM? If so, you might approach them with the offer.

Ask your colleagues, JV partners and those you network with if they have any recommendations. While they may not be willing to give you the name of their OBM, they may be able to recommend others or see if their OBM has any recommendations.

## Letting go so your OBM can effectively support you

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One of the hardest parts of running a business, especially if you've built it from the ground up, is learning to let go. No matter how perfect your OBM is or how great your support team is, if you cannot or do not let go and let them do their job, your business will suffer.

Let me say that again. You must learn to trust your OBM so you can let go. It's the only way your OBM can support you. That isn't to say you shouldn't be involved, but you certainly don't need to micro-manage. Your OBM will care about your business as much as you do. They will not intentionally make decisions that would negatively affect you or your business.

If you're a control freak or think there's only one way to do everything in your business, you'll likely struggle with keeping a good support team in place. Nobody likes working with a control freak and to be honest, there's no need for them to. There are a lot of opportunities for them to work with people who are willing to let them do what they do best – and with minimal hassle.

If you cannot get past this on your own, you might want to hire a coach or mentor to help you through this stage.

## Building a long-term relationship with your OBM

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While the OBM's job is to make things easier for you, in turn, you should not be a drain on your OBM. You are the visionary, the queen bee, the leader and as such, you need to be effectively contributing to the success and growth of your business.

This means you should respect your OBM and their time. One way to do this is to keep emails and phone calls to a minimum, preferably setting aside a certain day or time to communicate each week or month.

Make sure you plan ahead for upcoming projects rather than waiting until the last minute to ask your team to drop everything and switch gears to meet your deadline.

Respect their days off. You don't want to be bothered when you're on vacation or taking the weekend off with your family and neither does your OBM – no matter what they say. Remember, your OBM is taking the work load off your plate. You don't want to become an added burden to them.

Kill the urge to micro-manage. You are the visionary, the OBM is the manager. As long as goals are being met, there's no reason for you to get in the way. Again, having measurable goals will allow you to watch how things are progressing and only step in when necessary.

Building trust, giving them freedom to do their job and showing respect are three ways to build a long-term relationship with your OBM.

Here are some more ways to show your appreciation and continue to build your relationship:

- A simple thank you is always appreciated. You'd be surprised at how little they hear this. Mail them a card for an added surprise.
- Pay them well. A good OBM is worth their weight in gold. If you've been working together for a while and are still paying the same as when you first started, offer them a raise or annual bonus.
- Talk about how much they help you to your colleagues and friends. Although they typically only work with a couple clients at a time, it never hurts for an OBM to have client referrals.
- Write a testimonial for them on LinkedIn, send it privately so that they can add it to their website or record it on video or audio as these have much more credibility.

Referrals can also be for things other than just OBM work. Perhaps you know of a contest that the OBM might want to participate in. Maybe someone is looking to interview an OBM for magazine piece.

If a partner that you are speaking with is having trouble with XXXX and you know your OBM ran into this same issue and effectively overcame it, suggest your partner contact your OBM for advice (assuming your OBM is ok with that). All of these will help your OBM become viewed as an 'expert', something they will certainly appreciate.

*There you have it!*

As you can see, you don't have to be a large corporation with a multi-million-dollar account to hire a qualified business manager. It just takes a bit of forethought, planning and of course, good follow-through.

**Contact us today to discuss your requirements at [support@adminaholics.com](mailto:support@adminaholics.com).**