

Online Business Managers & Virtual Assistants

A Comparison Chart

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What is the difference between an Online Business Manager and a Virtual Assistant?

This is the one question I'm asked most often, from both business owners (who do they hire?) and from VAs as well (do they want to become an OBM?)

Although similar in nature, there are some key differences between the two roles:

	ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER	VIRTUAL ASSISTANT
FOCUS <i>The challenge for the OBM is to shift from doing to managing...</i>	The focus of the Online Business Manager is on 'management' - you are hired to keep an eye on the big picture and manage all the pieces (projects, team members, operations, expenses) to ensure that all projects are getting completed in a timely and efficient manner.	The focus of the Virtual Assistant is on 'doing' - you are hired to perform specific tasks (i.e.: customer service, shopping cart maintenance, etc) or complete specific projects (i.e.: setup a new member area or blog) and are the ones actually doing the work.
MEASURES OF SUCCESS <i>The OBM has to manage ALL tasks and projects, not just their own.</i>	Everyone's tasks and projects are being completed and delivered in a timely fashion. The team is happy and motivated. Systems are running smoothly and efficiently.	Your own tasks and projects are being completed and delivered in a timely fashion.
LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY <i>It is a much higher level of responsibility - and the OBM needs to be up for it.</i>	You are responsible for the success and smooth functioning of the entire business (as outlined above) - not just your own individual work.	You are responsible for your own individual work .
NUMBER OF CLIENTS <i>The OBM gets to 'go deep' with a select few clients, vs. juggling the expectations of multiple clients.</i>	Because of the level of responsibility that you have with each client, an Online Business Manager can only effectively work with 2 or 3 clients at a time in this capacity.	Virtual Assistants will generally work with 5-10 clients , give or take a few either way depending on the workload with each client.

ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER

VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

COMPENSATION

As an OBM you need to be motivated by incentive based pay.

Base + incentive structure. You may start working on an hourly or retainer basis, but when you officially step into the OBM role the opportunity for incentive based pay is open to you. (Want to learn more about this payment structure? [Join us for the next IAOBM member call.](#))

Hourly or project based. Most VAs charge for their work on an hourly basis, which can be billed in advance as a retainer or monthly for hours worked. Some will charge a flat rate by project for certain services.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

What kind of lifestyle do you want to create long-term?

As a business manager gaining the very strong trust of a few key business owners, a team that does the doing, and upside earnings potential you have the opportunity to **build a lifestyle that doesn't require you to work every day** in order to be financially free. When your income isn't directly tied to the hours you work, you have the freedom to 'work less while earning more' in the long run.

In the classic hourly VA model, your income is directly related to the hours that you work... and you will need to continue to **work the same (or possibly even more) hours** in order to create the level of income that you want. This can affect your overall lifestyle if you find yourself working more than you would like!

WHY BUSINESS OWNERS WANT TO HIRE...

The OBM frees up the business owner to do the things only they can do in their business...

Business owners want to hire an OBM when **they've grown the business as far as they can being the 'only one in charge'**. Usually around the early to mid 6-figure range a business owner becomes tapped-out and simply can't (and doesn't want to) be the one who is managing the day-to-day activities of the business. They need someone who can step into this role and take this off their plate.

Business owners hire Virtual Assistants **to do the various tasks and projects that they need completed in their business.** Most will hire in the very early stages of their business (help setup websites, shopping carts, etc) and will also need the ongoing support of VAs long term as the business grows.

Want to learn more?

- Grab a copy of the book *Becoming an Online Business Manager: Playing a Bigger Game with Your Clients (and Yourself)* at www.BecominganOBM.com
- Join the International Association of Online Business Managers – for aspiring and active OBMs at www.OBMConnect.com
- If you are ready to dive into the role of the OBM wholeheartedly with both feet be sure to join the Online Business Manager Certification program at www.CertifiedOBM.com
- And of course, you are always welcome to read my musings and sometimes random ramblings on 'all things biz' at my blog www.OnlineBusinessManager.com