

THE
DEFINITIVE GUIDE
TO BECOMING AN

**ONLINE
BUSINESS
MANAGER**

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO BECOMING AN ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER



“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

Confucius

The above Confucius quote is one of my all time favorites because of all the truth in the statement.

And I’m extraordinarily lucky. I’ve found a “job” I absolutely love, which is working for myself as an Online Business Manager and helping other online business owners and entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

But here’s the funny thing. While I love the job, and the work doesn’t feel like work because I enjoy it so much, I’ve never worked harder in my whole life.

- Hard like having a 30 day window of time to ensure a full course gets made, a sales funnel created, and that it all gets launched without a glitch.
- Hard like taking ownership of the operations of someone’s business that has never had a process or procedure in place, yet who wants to scale and double their business within 6 months.
- Hard like having to defend your ideas to a client when the two of you disagree on strategy for their business, and being confident in your abilities to guide them toward their goal.

Now, if any of the examples above make you squirm, then you can stop reading the rest of this post right now. Becoming an Online Business Manager may not be the best career path for you.

But if the kind of “hard work” I described above excites you, and the thought of making very good money while doing it sounds even better, I invite you to keep reading.



WELCOME TO THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BECOMING AN ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER

In this first edition of this guide, I'm going to help you navigate a little sliver of the online business world and outline the life of an Online Business Manager – what it is, what it isn't, how you can make money as an Online Business Manager, and what it takes to become one.

This first edition is being published in February 2018, and I intend to update this guide regularly in order to keep it up-to-date and relevant (that, and I'm sure I've missed a thing or two!).

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WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

This guide is perfect for those who are already freelancing online (i.e. Virtual Assistants) as social media managers, content creators, and those who help with business operations (like website and blog management, customer support, etc).

If you're ready to expand on the skills you already have, provide more value to your clients, and ultimately earn more money, I think you'll find a lot of valuable information in this post.

This guide is also great for those who want to make the transition online who have familiarity with things like social media marketing, blogging, and who are skilled at project management.

If you own an online business, and are thinking about hiring an Online Business Manager, you'll get a lot of value from this information as well. It'll help you understand what to look for in this person, how much you can expect to pay, and you'll find out exactly how a skilled Online Business Manager can help you grow and manage your business.

If none of the above applies to you, and you're looking to start a career online, keep reading. While it may be premature to acquire a role as an Online Business Manager, use this guide as a reference point as you seek out freelancing opportunities to get started.

WHAT IS AN ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER?

There is not one job description for an Online Business Manager (or "OBM"). By nature of the role, there's a lot of variation in what classifies someone as an OBM. And since the title is mostly self assigned (there are no formal degrees or certifications), there's a lot of room for interpretation.

In general, however, an OBM is someone who helps manage the online business operations for a client or business. An OBM may help with the day to day, managing staff and teams, executing on projects, and working on business development.



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The offline equivalent would be a small business “general manager”.

Because an OBM assumes so much responsibility, they tend to be brought on in at least a semi-permanent capacity - working long term for a business either part-time or full time.

But this is not always the case. As a working Online Business Manager, I have some long term clients, but I tend to work on short term projects and come in to oversee big launches, strategy restructuring campaigns, or even course development.

I see my role as an OBM being not just someone who can execute on a plan, but who can design a plan with growth and efficiency in mind. I charge a premium for my services so it doesn't always make sense for a client to keep me around for the day-to-day (and I like the flexibility of more short-term projects anyway).

WHAT MAKES AN “ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER” DIFFERENT FROM A “VIRTUAL ASSISTANT” OR “PROJECT MANAGER”?

There can be a lot of crossover in what a “Virtual Assistant”, “Online Business Manager”, and “Project Manager” does, so it's important to understand the nuances that separate each role. Not only does the amount of responsibility vary greatly, but so does the level of compensation.

VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

A “Virtual Assistant” or “VA” is someone that is hired to help complete certain tasks. A Virtual Assistant has no real project oversight, does not manage staff, and isn't responsible for reaching goals. While there are VA generalists - those who can handle a multitude of different tasks - it tends to be more efficient for both the business owner and the VA to narrow scope of function.

Therefore, it's not uncommon for a business owner to work with a VA that helps them with social media tasks, a VA that responds to customer service issues, and a VA who helps maintain the website and other technical integrations.



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Skill level and compensation fluctuate dramatically at the Virtual Assistant level. Geography plays into this as well. Business owners around the world can hire Virtual Assistants from countries with a low cost of living for \$5 (or less) per hour to complete basic tasks like data entry. And then depending on whether a business needs someone fluent in English and proficient at delivering great customer service or someone with a specific set of technical skills, compensation for higher-level Virtual Assistants can be as much as \$45 per hour or more.

PROJECT MANAGER

Someone who positions themselves as an “Online Project Manager” and someone who identifies themselves as an “Online Business Manager” have very similar functions.

Both roles are responsible for executing on projects as they relate to growing an online business, and both are responsible for overseeing all parties involved to make sure the job gets done.

The differences and few, yet significant:

- Most Project Managers only work on time-bound projects. They come in, do the work, and then are gone. While a good Project Manager will be concerned with the project goals, they generally don't have their compensation tied to results. Many Online Business Managers work so that their compensation is tied to results. The better the results, the more they are paid.
- The Project Manager may come to the role with professional degrees or certifications in project management. This may or may not be important for a business owner deciding to hire either a PM or an OBM
- The Project Manager may or may not have the understanding of online business to offer strategy guidance like an Online Business Manager.



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As you will see from this guide, one of the differentiating factors that makes up an Online Business Manager is their strategy insight.

As an OBM, I am forever a student of internet marketing, and I consider how I contribute to the overall business strategy as my most valuable asset I offer my clients. If they don't want my strategy insight and support in designing the plan or campaign, we're not going to be a good fit for each other. I demand to be involved in the decision making process to help my clients reach the next level of business; it's largely what they pay me for.

HOW TO KNOW YOU'RE READY TO EVOLVE INTO A ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER

If your favorite part of being a Virtual Assistant or freelancer is that you don't have to "take your work home with you", then becoming an Online Business Manager may not be the right fit.

And this is perfectly Okay!! One of the great benefits of pursuing work as a freelancer is that you get hired to do a job, you do it (well and to the best of your ability hopefully), and you're done. Go live your life.

But if you'd rather trade a little bit of that detachment for an increase in pay - or if you are the type of person who simply is unable to disconnect fully from the work they do - then you may be ready to evolve into an Online Business Manager.

Yes, I definitely wanted to see more income come in from my work, but what ultimately dictated my transition to becoming an Online Business Manager was that I felt like I could do a better job if I was more a part of the process.

Make no mistake, the clients I found on Elance during the early days of my freelance career were legitimately annoyed at my level of interest. They wanted me to simply deliver the work they hired me to do and then get ready for the next assignment.



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So my bringing this up is not to come across as “high and mighty” or altruistic in my wanting to be more involved. There’s always a time and a place, and I realized after freelancing for a while that my place required being more involved in the strategy and overall results my work generated.

I needed to attract clients that needed me more as much as my clients needed more help in their business. It was a symbiotic two-way street.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES AN ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER DO?

We’ve discussed the big picture as it relates to the job function of an Online Business Manager, but now let’s deep dive into the nitty gritty of what an OBM does.

As I mentioned earlier, there is not one general job description for an Online Business Manager. There are a ton of different online business models out there, so naturally, a ton of different ways a OBM fits into the general management picture of a business.

Below are some examples from my own personal experience:

- I’ve been hired to manage a continuity program (membership site - including content creation, member retention, and promotional strategy).
- I’ve been hired to create course curriculums geared to getting students results and geared towards having a high completion rate. This involves unpacking the expertise of a client and formatting it into a training that is actionable and helps their students achieve a real, tangible result.
- I’ve been hired to design and manage launches (with webinars, using the “Product Launch Formula”, and even the “Ask Method”). To do this well, I need to understand the niche, customer buying triggers in that niche, copywriting, persuasion, and all the technical components required to execute on a launch.
- I’ve been hired to design sales funnels with upsell offers, nurture sequences, etc.



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- I've been hired to streamline business operations (get things automated and add efficiencies). I've had to write processes for virtual assistants, create social media content and promotional calendars, integrate everything into software applications, and even hire employees.

And there's more that an OBM can do!

- Help manage a podcast - scheduling interviews, production, distribution, etc.
- Manage an Ecommerce business
- Manage a blog, content marketing strategy, and social media
- Manage the customer experience
- And much, much more. The sky really is the limit.

I share this not to overwhelm you, but to show you the diversity and what's possible. I would never encourage someone to master all of these things at once. In fact, if you're interested in becoming an Online Business Manager, I encourage you to hone in on one speciality at a time. Find one service as an OBM you can offer clients and slowly add more. Online Business Managers are in so much demand that once you provide a client with an amazing service, they're going to naturally ask you to meet more of their needs. This is how my business grew, but you have to proceed slowly and at a pace that is manageable for you.

PATHS YOU CAN TAKE AS AN ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER

Just as there is not one job description for an Online Business Manager, there is not a one-size-fits all type of business an Online Business Manager can have. Here are three popular models:

Independent

This is my model. I am self-employed and work as an "independent contractor" for the clients who hire me. I may outsource things when I need help, but when it comes to working with a client, I'm their only point of contact during a project. Anything I do in order to get the job done remains behind the scenes and is my responsibility.



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Partnership or Agency

This is what I am considering working towards, and if you really want to scale an OBM business, this is what I would recommend. Since there are so many different skills that an OBM can specialize in, there can be tremendous power in numbers.

For example, I specialize in course creation, sales funnels, and launches. If I partnered with an OBM that specialized in podcasts, ecommerce, or even systems integration, we could triple our client base and the services we offered. Not to mention the support that comes when working in a team.

Get Hired

As the internet evolves and more and more companies emerge with thriving online businesses, there are more and more opportunities for Online Business Managers to find salaried, benefited positions if that suited them best.

This may sound contradictory for many who enter this space who want freedom and the autonomy that being self-employed promises, but more and more companies are realizing that they need to provide flexible and alternative work arrangements for their employees if they're going to retain them. There are more and more remote positions available, the salaries can be tremendous, and this path can be a great fit for someone who really desires to be a part of a team and culture.

YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WILL SEE YOU THROUGH

Okay - so by now I think it's understood that there is no one-size-fits-all type of Online Business Manager. There's not a specific job description, and what you do from day-to-day is bound to change.

So what are the skills you need to be successful in this type of role? They mostly boil down to what I call your "transferable skills" - things you've learned along the way (via past employment and client work) - and your intrinsic work ethic.

Your work ethic here is key. Everything else can be learned.



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Transferable Skills from Previous Experience (not a complete list, examples only):

- Working knowledge of software / tools (i.e. WordPress, Email Service Providers, CRM like Infusionsoft, Webinar platforms, funnel building tools, etc)
- Copywriting experience
- Course Curriculum Design & Creation
- Social Media Strategy & Management
- Membership Site Management
- Customer Service
- And so, so much more.

Transferable Skills nurtured or intrinsic in you (not a complete list, examples only):

- Committed
- Tenacious
- Confident in your abilities
- Analytical
- Creative
- Empathetic
- Driven
- Passionate
- Kind
- Compassionate
- Leadership
- Problem Solver
- Resilient
- Resourceful
- Can do mindset!



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INTERNET MARKETING STRATEGY - YOUR KEY TO A LIFELONG CAREER

I'm letting my nerdy self shine here, but I really enjoy learning internet marketing strategy of all kinds, and I am confident that my raw interest contributes to my success as an Online Business Manager. I invest in myself and take courses, I read books, I attend events, and participate in communities where people congregate and share lessons learned, ideas, and support one another.

And then I take action!

Keeping yourself informed, and then putting what you learn into practice, is the key to being able to help your clients grow their business.

TIP: In order to retain info, I have to read and take notes on a topic. But that used to mean I was a SLOW reader. Not good with a busy business to run. To speed up the process drastically, I also get the audible version. I can speed up the audio to at least 1.5 and follow along with the book at the same time.

Here are some books I recommend for anyone interested in becoming an Online Business Manager:

- [Dot Com Secrets](#)
- [Expert Secret](#)
- [The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles](#)
- [Launch](#)
- [The Ultimate Sales Machine](#)
- [The Ultimate Sales Letter](#)
- [Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got](#)
- [Blue Ocean Strategy](#)



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TOOLS TO USE AS AN ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGER

As an Online Business Manager, you're expected to have working knowledge of the software systems and tools your clients use to manage and grow an online business. Below are some of the more common tools used in online business.

If you're overwhelmed at the thought of having to learn a ton of different platforms, don't be. Most paid tools have great resources for users, communities of users that help each other, and when in doubt, there is usually a YouTube tutorial on exactly what you need to learn.

I am an affiliate of some of the platforms I recommend in this post, and will earn a commission if you sign up through me. Thank you!

Social Media Networks

- All the majors: Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
- Scheduling tools like Hootsuite, Buffer, etc.

Funnel Tools & Landing Page Software

- [ClickFunnels](#)
- Leadpages
- ThriveThemes

Membership Software

- Teachable
- Kajabi

Email Service Providers

- [Convertkit](#)
- Aweber
- Active Campaign
- MailChimp



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Websites

- Domain Hosting & Registrar platforms (i.e. [DreamHost](#), [Bluehost](#), etc)
- WordPress
- WordPress plugins (Yoast, WooCommerce, Sumo, etc)
- Shopify
- Wix
- Squarespace

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

- Infusionsoft
- Ontraport

Payments & Bookkeeping

- PayPal
- Stripe
- SamCart
- [Freshbooks](#)
- Quickbooks

Team Communication & Cloud Support

- Asana
- Slack
- Amazon S3
- Google Drive
- Dropbox

HOW TO MAKE MONEY (AND HOW MUCH MONEY ARE WE TALKING ANYWAY)?

I consider being an Online Business Manager as being one of the most flexible business models online in terms of generating revenue from a variety of different sources. Because you are an authority - even for a very small group of people - you have the opportunity to serve them in a variety of different ways, which can lend to a diverse and eclectic revenue model for your business.



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Client Work

This is the most obvious revenue path. Charge clients for the work you do. But how you get paid can vary a lot. Here are a few ways to structure your relationships with clients and get paid:

- **Hourly Rate** - While the easiest to figure out in the short term, I caution you to avoid this model. It doesn't really serve either party, and can negatively affect the outcome of a project. Not only are you still trading time for dollars, but your client deserves to understand the real cost of bringing you on board. When hours worked become a factor, shortcuts are inevitable. Still, let's assign a dollar amount here. Work for no less than \$50-\$100 per hour depending on the level of complexity of what's involved.
- **Project Based** - This is probably the most common method when working on short term projects, and getting paid by project gives the client the advantage during more difficult projects when things become time consuming or complex of understanding what they will need to pay to have you onboard. When bidding a project, your responsibility is to use the law of averages (how many easy tasks, how many difficult, and how much time overall with this project take) to come up with an appropriate bid. Every project is different, so I can't guide you here on what to charge. My only advice here is to walk your client through your proposal and help them understand where you're coming from with your bid. If they have questions, address them, and be flexible where you can. Also - tap into your strategy brain and come up with alternate solutions to their plan if their agenda is overly complex and expensive. Help them simplify things as to be able to afford you.
- **Revenue Share** - I only recommend this model after you've worked with a client a few times and know what's possible. Not every client will have a great business, so no matter how awesome you are, you may not be able to help them get results on a product or launch so you'll want to avoid a revenue share model until you've properly vetted them as a business. But here's where things get fun when you're talking revenue. Let's say you're helping a business owner with a course launch. If you were to just bid the project out, they may only be able to justify bringing you on



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if you could do the work for \$7500. But if you negotiate a 20% revenue share, you could be looking at a \$20,000 pay day if their course sales reach \$100,000 within the window of time you define for the launch.

- **Retainer or Salary** - If your client work is ongoing and if your client wants to ensure access to you long-term, opt for a retainer or monthly salary. After I have worked a project or two with a client, I usually transition them to this model in combination with a revenue share agreement for individual project launches. For reference, I set my “maintenance” retainer with a client (where access is guaranteed at a certain # of hours per month) at no less than \$1500 per month. This package is ideal because I remain involved in the strategy side of the business, help out with the day-to-day as needed, but the business owner isn't on the hook for keeping me on in a large capacity long-term.

Affiliate Earnings

When I recommend a tool to a client (i.e. a landing page tool like LeadPages or ClickFunnels, a bookkeeping system like Freshbooks, or possibly an email service provider like Convertkit), I will offer a discount on my services to have me set it up for them in exchange for them signing up via my affiliate link.

I then earn recurring commissions on their use of the tool I recommend.

Something to note: Earnings here are not huge, but are great nonetheless. And I only recommend things I approve of and am happy to manage for my clients. I don't recommend a tool for the sake of making more money; in most cases, I lose a bit of revenue in these situations had I just charged full price for my services. The benefit (for both of us) is that I end up getting to use a tool I am very familiar with and the client saves a little bit of money.

Other Monetization Strategies

There really are so many different things you could do as an Online Business Manager to earn additional revenue in your business. Remember - you're an authority. SO LEVERAGE THAT.



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HERE ARE SOME IDEAS:

- **Hold paid workshops / retreats** for your clients to help them scale, learn a new strategy, get to the next level, etc.
- **Create a course to sell to your audience.** You're not convert every lead into a paying client, but maybe there is something you can teach to your wider audience that they are looking to get help with.
- **Create a continuity program.** You may not be able to get every lead or every client to hire you on a retainer, but perhaps there is monthly training you can offer in a group setting to help your audience achieve a specific result
- **Offer coaching.** Once you start building an audience based on your expertise, you're going to find out that there is a segment of business owners attracted to you that are not prepared to hire you, but want your help. Offer these people business coaching. Help them become DIY experts in their business. Empower them to be their own problem solvers and implementers.

HOW TO MARKET YOURSELF

If you're currently working as a freelancer in some capacity (as a Virtual Assistant, Social Media Manager, or other), then the best and first place you should be marketing yourself is to your existing clients.

Tell them the direction you want to be headed in, how you want to deliver more value to them as an Online Business Manager, and open the lines of communication to taking on more responsibility (and getting compensated more).

Go for low hanging fruit. Your existing client base will be the best place to start to expand your services with. They trust you, and will most likely allow you to learn on the job with them. Until you are able to confirm results from your efforts, be flexible and don't ask for too much up front in terms of an increase in compensation. Prove your worth.



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Outside of existing clients, here's a great list to get started with in terms of marketing yourself to new clients:

- Make sure you have a simple, yet clear website detailing your services and offerings
- **START BLOGGING.** Share your wins, client results, insights, and ideas. This is HUGE. Don't neglect starting and nurturing a blog as an Online Business Manager
- Engage in Facebook groups where your ideal client hangs out and contribute to discussions without being overly self-promotional. Focus on being helpful first. The client interest will come as a result of being helpful.
- Update your LinkedIn profile and focus on including keywords related to the work you want to do as an OBM.
- Launch a client acquisition campaign. Here's a very simple client acquisition funnel you could launch:
 - Get results and a case study under your belt
 - Create a case study video detailing your the results you obtained (and how you got them) for a client.
 - Create a lead generation landing page using the case study as the lead magnet.
 - Send targeted Facebook ads to that landing page
 - Follow-up with leads and get bookings for discovery calls.



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WHAT'S NEXT

Whew!! We covered a ton in this guide, didn't we?

My goal with sharing all this information is to help you understand the landscape a little bit better in order to see if going down the path of being an Online Business Manager is right for you.

I'm available to you for questions. Please connect with me on social if you'd like to continue the conversation.

[Lifestyle Business Architects](#) *(Facebook Group)*

[Cindy on Facebook](#)

[Cindy on Instagram](#)

I'm also in the planning stages of launching Online Business Manager School. This will be a 6 week program designed to help you not only learn the ins-and-outs of how to be a great Online Business Manager, but the course will also help you land your first clients!

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE.](#)

Thank you for your interest in this material, and I look forward to staying in touch!





Bonus!

MY SECRET CLIENT ACQUISITION STRATEGY

There's one thing about being an Online Business Manager I didn't share in the full guide online. It's because frankly, I didn't want to overwhelm (or discourage) the general reader, but it's important so I'm going to share it with you here.

As a service provider, our goal should always be to create a referral based business where our clients rave about us to all their business owner friends. But easier said than done, right? When we're just starting out, where do the referrals come from?

They come from a "Case Study Business"!

In order to start generating leads and clients into your business, all you need is a simple website, a simple client acquisition funnel, and at least one case study showing results you've gotten for a client.

Here's the basic funnel idea for a "Case Study Business":

1. ID the niche you're targeting (i.e. coaches, ecommerce, etc).
2. Get specific results for a client in that niche (work for free if you have to).
3. Results should be tied to sales in their business.
4. Target business owners in that niche on Facebook and run an ad campaign to a landing page.



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5. Prospect should be compelled to opt-in for case study results based on your landing page copy. A great case study headline would be: *"How [person or business name] increased sales by [specific amount] after hiring [your business name - or "an Online Business Manager"]"*
6. Redirect lead to a case study results page where you have a video detailing what you did to help your client achieve specific results. This will be generally how your help freed up owner's time in order to focus on sales generating activities. Keep in mind, you want to use this case study video to help you get clients.
7. Include a call-to-action for a free discovery call (aka "sales call") for businesses that meet a certain criteria. Include scarcity.
8. Include an application form. You will want to vet leads to ensure they're a good fit.
9. Send a followup sequence to those leads who did not book with additional case study info to maximize discovery call bookings.

Here are some important things to consider:

1. For your case study business, find a business owner with existing sales (target owners making less than \$10,000 per month and who have less than 2 virtual assistants helping them with tasks. You want to find the DIYer.
2. Look for these clients in Facebook Groups where you network with your ideal target client (by being helpful).
3. Define a set period of time (# of hours over # of days) and layout exactly what you will do to support this owner as an OBM.
4. Get the owner to agree to bring you on FOR FREE on a trial period. Let them know you're looking to help them in exchange for a video testimonial interview, and that if they like the results, you'd be happy to come on board paid in the future.
5. Detail for your case study client exactly what you'll do / what they can expect.



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6. When you start working, your #1 goal is to ensure that the owner's time is free to generate sales. **This is the most important point!** As a supporting role, it's not always easy to tie our work directly to sales, but we have to in order to effectively market our services.
7. Once the trial period is over, find out how much time you saved the owner (that was then redirected to sales) and document how much more money the owner brought into their business as a result of having you on board.

Now go grow your Online Business Manager business!

Congrats on getting to the end of this guide!!

I hope you feel more prepared to start your Online Business Manager business, and I hope I've inspired you to take action with some of the tips and strategies I've shared.

If you're interested in joining me in Online Business Manager School - where you can expect my direct support for 6 weeks while I help you get ready to launch and grow your own OBM business (with clients and all!), then I invite you to learn more by clicking the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE.](#)

Cheers!

Cindy Molchany
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