

Affiliate Manager

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Affiliate Manager

Joint-venture partners on the Internet who endorse your certification program and send you leads are called *affiliates*. And the job of recruiting affiliates, managing those relationships, and supplying affiliates with tools they can use to promote your program at their website is done by an Affiliate Manager.

If you have any Internet presence at all, you need affiliates to promote for you—and eventually, as your certification program grows, you will need an Affiliate Manager to manage your affiliate relationships.

Of course, in the early stages of your company's growth, you can combine the Affiliate Manager position into either the New Business Development role, the Marketing Implementation job or the Internet Promotions Manager position. Eventually though—and hopefully—your online presence will become so robust that you'll need someone full-time to manage your affiliate program.

Finding a Good Affiliate Manager

A leading Internet consultant once told me that most of the top Affiliate Managers on the Internet today are women. I don't know if that holds true for every company, but I can tell you that women are typically superb at relationship-building, follow-up and just plain calling to check in. These are the hallmarks of a good Affiliate Manager. In fact, ultimately, you'll want them to be on a first-name basis with the top 5% to 20% of your affiliates—since those are the ones who will likely produce 95% of your affiliate-generated business.

Other attributes of a good Affiliate Manager include constantly following up with email list owners—including those who say *No, Not now, Maybe in six months, Not the appropriate offer, Price point too high for my list, Need a different product*—or worse—no response at all. Good affiliate managers are not daunted by rejection, nor do they take anything personally. They understand that building a successful affiliate program is really just a numbers game. The more potential affiliates they contact and the more professional-looking, top-notch marketing campaigns your company runs online—the more quality affiliates you'll recruit.

Of course, recruiting them is only half of the formula. Your Affiliate Manager also has to continually encourage affiliates to run your promotions to their list—and your company needs to constantly produce fresh new emails, lead magnets, and other tools they need in order to do so. Affiliates will rarely write their own copy to promote your product—or even think through how your promotion will appeal to their list. They rarely advise on bonuses-with-purchase, price points, discounts and other details. All those details are your Affiliate Manager's job.

Online services such as www.upwork.com, www.agentsofvalue.com and www.guru.com all have seasoned Internet professionals who can help get your Affiliate Program started.

Interviewing Affiliate Manager Candidates

When interviewing a potential Affiliate Manager, there are key characteristics to look for. First and foremost, a top candidate should be friendly and personable, with sales background of some kind preferred. Often times, your Affiliate Manager will need to convince a tentative website owner to say “yes” to promoting your certification program or service.

A top candidate should also have some familiarity with how marketing campaigns are conducted on the Internet—since it’s likely they’ll get questions about how your campaigns will be run. Terminology like autoresponders, drip campaigns, lead magnets, CRM, affiliate tracking, long-form copy, landing page and other terms related to e-commerce are words your Affiliate Manager will hear every day (and should know).

But perhaps the best skill of all is the ability to pro-actively seek out companies, membership sites, newsletter publishers and website owners whose customers, subscribers, members, students and others would be perfect prospects to buy your certification program or other services. A good Affiliate Manager is always identifying potential new affiliates and contacting them to recruit them as promoters for you.

Considering that you stand to make hundreds of thousands of dollars (or even millions) on the Internet, your Affiliate Manager will be a key player on your cash-generation team. So be sure to keep the above key skills in mind when interviewing potential candidates.

To help you develop your own list of interview questions, review the sample questions below:

Interviewing Affiliate Manager Candidates

Could you detail the types of affiliate programs you’ve worked on for previous employers?

What products or services were sold and at what price points were they offered?

How many affiliates did you manage at any one time? _____

Do you know how many of those affiliates generated regular sales? _____ / _____%

How many affiliates did you personally recruit or add during your time there? _____

What did you find was the best way to recruit affiliates? _____

Did you have a basic sales script or email that you sent to affiliates to recruit them? _____

Was it easy to recruit affiliates for your past employer(s) or clients? _____

If not, what was difficult about it? _____

What kinds of tools did you initiate or make available to affiliates to use in promoting your employer's product or service?

Did you personally negotiate commissions, profit splits or other payouts to affiliates? _____

Did you maintain affiliate blogs or other communication tools specifically to communicate with affiliates on a regular basis?

How often did you communicate with affiliates? What kinds of things did you announce to the affiliate database?

Have you ever worked with CPA affiliate networks* or brokers? _____

What are the challenges and benefits of working with them?

* CPA stands for Cost Per Acquisition. A single CPA network will recruit tens of thousands of website owners (affiliates), then configure your promotion to run at their websites. The CPA network tracks sales and pays affiliates a commission for each sale. For a list of top CPA Networks, visit: <https://mthink.com/all-networks/best-cpa-networks/>

Once you've determined the candidate's level of expertise in building and managing affiliate programs—and their expertise fits what you are looking for—you can begin to ask more specific questions about such matters as their desired compensation, expected staffing or budget requirements, availability, and so on.

Hiring and Negotiating Affiliate Manager Pay

Many affiliate managers I know work only part-time for their clients—and they may have more than one client, too. In other words, don't feel that you have to hire someone full-time, unless you have a plan for conducting an active and robust affiliate program needing constant management. That means you not only have a website that constantly sells—but you also have an aggressive promotional calendar *with the time and copywriting ability* to run promotions at your website or to your list on at least a monthly basis.

What should you pay an Affiliate Manager, whether part-time or full-time?

The ideal situation is to motivate them by paying most of their compensation as a percentage of sales generated by the affiliates they recruit—or, alternatively, a flat fee per new affiliate that they recruit. As another alternative, you could pay them a small monthly retainer for the first 90 days to cover their expenses—then pay them an amount for each certification program or other service sold through affiliates that they have recruited for you. Never worry that your Affiliate Manager might “make too much money.” I've written checks for \$25,000 and more—because my Affiliate Manager recruited new affiliates who endorsed my programs to their customers who eventually purchased several hundred thousand dollars' worth of products. We were both happy.

Defining the Job Duties

The actual job duties you assign will depend on whether you have an established affiliate program or not. I find that almost all small businesses could be doing more to build their affiliate program, so I'll base my recommended duties on the three different development stages your

company may be operating under. In each of the three stages below, your Affiliate Manager should:

Stage One: Set up your affiliate registration and tracking system (or your entire CRM, if not established already). Develop initial affiliate promotional tools such as email announcements, newsletter articles and banners.* Program individual products into your shopping cart to calculate commission payouts to affiliates. Add a link at the bottom of your website that reads, “Join Our Affiliate Program.” Send these click-throughs to an affiliate-only webpage that convinces prospective affiliates to click through, register in your shopping cart’s affiliate section, download your pre-written tools—then begin promoting for you.

Stage Two: Recruit initial “super-affiliates” (those website owners with large email lists or special affinity with their list) to send an email to their list with a powerful endorsement of your certification program or service. Recruit and manage these initial super-affiliates by telephone and email. Coordinate and launch an initial marketing campaign promoting your entry-level product to these super-affiliates’ lists.

Stage Three: Begin communicating via email, webinar, or other mass-communication means with affiliates generated by your initial marketing campaign. Build affiliate database by researching potential affiliates then emailing them directly with an invitation to promote for you. Continue communication with them. Approach CPA† affiliate networks to promote to tens of thousands of affiliates at one time. Plan an annual schedule of Affiliate promotions.

* More about affiliate recruitment systems and tools can be found in System Two: Your Internet Selling System.

† CPA stands for “cost per acquisition.” A single CPA network will recruit tens of thousands of website owners (affiliates), then configure your promotion to run at their websites. The CPA network tracks sales and pays affiliates a commission for each sale.

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