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# Should You Outsource SEM via Affiliate Marketing?

by David Troop

**A**n affiliate program strives to generate quality traffic to your site, in order to generate leads, sales, or other desired actions.

One of the most difficult steps in obtaining high quality traffic is deciding which sources are best managed in-house, and which ones are best outsourced through your affiliate program.

A vital metric in identifying which channels to outsource is cost. Search engine marketing (SEM) is well known for its expense, both budget and time. And, as an affiliate manager with over ten years of experience in the industry, I can tell you that a quality SEM strategy can make or break a company.

Is it wise to continue running your SEM efforts in-house when the stakes are so high?

Here are three key factors to consider:

## 1. How many hours are needed to maintain your SEM efforts?

As your online company grows, so should your SEM efforts. Like anything in digital marketing, the only way to know what will work is to test and optimize. Whether you want to target brand keywords, competitors' keywords or long tail keywords, the more you test, the more time and resources you'll expend.

Do you have the manpower to support the hours needed for keyword testing? Outsourcing your SEM through an affiliate program may be a more attainable option.

## 2. What experience does your in-house team have with SEM?

If you are currently considering an employee to lead your SEM efforts, you'll need to trust that their SEM knowledge is

credible and that their past experience produced successful results. If an employee accidentally implements the wrong keyword budget, or adjusts a bid too high, this could incur \$1k+ in non-refundable expenses without any return—an expensive lesson to learn.

By outsourcing your SEM to affiliates, you can avoid the risks that come with hiring and training employees, while gaining the benefits of working with established SEM experts, and paying only when a sale or lead is generated.

## 3. Why should I outsource my SEM to affiliates instead of utilizing an SEM agency?

There are countless SEM agencies available for hire. These companies are usually available to start working with you immediately with the only cost requirements being setup and service fees along with your keyword budget.

Unfortunately, these are locked terms and don't guarantee sales or leads. If you want to secure experienced SEM talent, yet avoid the constant service fees, then working through the affiliate channel is a compelling option.

Many affiliates can get started fast and you don't pay them a dime until a lead or sale is generated.

Search engine marketing is a very detail-oriented and time-intensive task; with Google constantly making algorithmic adjustments, it is imperative that your SEM resources have the proven talent to produce revenue results.

Think through the three questions above to help you place your SEM efforts in the right hands. [FF]